Provincial capital: Maidan Shahr, now more like a village, is located 35 kilometres southwest of Kabul, and easily accessible by the recently rehabilitated Kabul – Kandahar Highway. In 2004, there is a construction boom in Maidan Shahr. Mainly people from Jalrez and Nirkh are moving in. Maidan Shahr may soon become a suburb to Kabul.

Population density: Areas along the Kabul – Kandahar Highway in the east are densely populated. The rest of province is sparsely populated, with concentration to areas where water is (was) available. See Map: Health Facilities, Chapter 8.Health.

Roads: The rehabilitated Kabul – Kandahar Highway is of great importance for the socio-economic development in the eastern parts of the province. The rest of the province has poor roads. In the Behsud districts, the roads are particularly bad. A study in 1997 (Madera & Solidarites), showed that many villages in the subdistricts of Behsud II were almost inaccessible by modern transport. In Meher Khana, for example, 96 percent of the villages had only a mule path. USAID has plans to fund the expansion of the secondary road network in Wardak to increase security and enable farm-to-market transports.

Warlords and other power holders: There is no major warlord in Wardak, but there are several small armed groups with local power. Remnants of the Taliban exist. The Provincial Governor is Alhaj-Qazi-Raz Mohammad Dalili, a former judge from Ghazni. Among the Hazaras, Mohammed Mohaqeq is said to be the most popular leader. See Chapter.3. Warlords and Other Power Holders.

Security for NGOs: In September 2004, the Afghanistan Non-Governmental Organisation Security Office (ANSO) wrote: "Extreme caution is advised in this province… Travel and work in higher risk areas, such as the southern and western parts of Wardak, should be minimised." See Chapter 4. The Security Situation for NGOs.

Women and human rights: Poverty, forced marriages, domestic violence and lack of education and awareness are common problems for women in Wardak (as elsewhere in Afghanistan). Women are denied fundamental human rights. Most women in Wardak live in extreme seclusion. Freedom of movement is highly restricted. See Chapter 5. Women and Human Rights.

Ethnic groups: The Behsud districts are almost exclusively inhabited by Hazaras. The rest of the districts have a Pashtun majority. Ethnic Tajiks are a minority group. Villages with a mixed population of Hazaras and Pashtuns are rare. Official data on ethnic composition are not available. Two UNHCR reports (2002) give an indication of the ethnic groups in Daimirdad: "around 63% Pashtun and 37% Hazara"; and in Nirkh: "about 80% Pashtun, 15% Tajik and 5% Hazara". There is a long history of fighting over land between Pashtuns and Hazaras. Under the Taliban regime, predominantly Pashtun, human rights abuses against the Hazaras were atrocious. Ethnic revenge attacks have been reported.

The pastoralist Kuchis (nomads) are ethnic Pashtuns. Relations between Kuchis and Hazaras are hostile due to the Kuchi close association with the Taliban.

Religion: The Pashtuns and the Tajiks are Sunni Muslims. Of the Hazaras, almost all are Shi'a Muslims (a small minority of the Hazaras are Sunni Muslims). According to NSP staff (October 2004), there are no longer any Ismaili communities in Wardak. The Sufi order of Qadiriya (founded in Bagdad) is found among the eastern Pashtuns of Wardak (Library of Congress Country Studies, 1997).

Languages: Pashtuns speak Pashtu. Most Kuchis are Pashtu-speaking. Tajiks and Hazaras speak Dari. Many men are bilingual.

Food insecurity: The National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) for 2004 has estimated that, based on market prices and satellite images of crop growth, 38 percent of the population in Wardak will not be able to cover their basic food (2,100 kcal per capita daily) and non-food needs up to the harvest in 2005. In some districts, the percentage is much higher, e.g. in the impoverished Behsud I district it is 65 percent. The situation there is further aggravated by isolation during the winter due to heavy snowfall and poor roads. The Behsud districts are among the most destitute and isolated in all of Afghanistan, with extreme levels of rural poverty, morbidity and other vulnerabilities. See Chapter 7. Agriculture.

Opium: The real breadwinner in Wardak, also and perhaps especially for the poor, is opium poppy. According to UNODC, the western districts of Wardak have increased their production of opium poppy substantially this year. Large segments of the population have been infuriated and alienated by the government poppy eradication programme which was initiated in Wardak in May 2004. See Chapter 6. The Opium Economy.

Main sources of income: Opium, (traditionally) agriculture, wage labour, food aid and remittances from male family members working in other parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and the Gulf states.

Refugees and IDPs: Large numbers of Wardakians cannot make a living in Wardak. Reportedly, many remain refugees in Pakistan and Iran or IDPs inside Afghanistan mainly for economic reasons.

Agriculture: It is often claimed that the eastern part of the province has enormous agricultural potential. The Kabul – Kandahar Highway makes transport of agricultural surplus easy. In the past, when rainfall was 'normal', harvests were good. The orchards of Wardak, including those of the Behsud valley, are famous for their excellent apples and other fruits such as apricots and plums. Indebtedness and landlessness are now major problems. See Chapter 7. Agriculture.

Education: Many schools have been built in Wardak during the past two years, and many more are needed. Primary school enrolment in 2003 was above the national average of 67% for boys (75% in Wardak) and below the national average of 40% for girls (25% in Wardak). There is a great need for teacher training, especially for

female teachers, and curriculum development. With support to 45 primary schools in Wardak, SCA is the major NGO in the education sector in the province. There are several smaller NGOs supporting schools, mainly along the Kabul – Kandahar Highway. See Chapter 8. Primary and Secondary Education.

Health: Several new health clinics have been built, equipped and staffed in the past two years, and many more are needed. Afghanistan's health indicators are among the worst in the world, with large gender gaps, e.g. almost half of all deaths among women of reproductive age are a result of pregnancy and childbirth. Only 6% of mothers in Wardak give birth in a health facility. SCA is the implementing partner to the Ministry of Health for the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) in Wardak. See Chapter 9. Health.

Disability: Disability rates due to polio, cerebral palsy, and conflict and accidents (including landmines) are high. SCA is a (the?) major provider of services on a permanent for the disabled in Wardak. See Chapter 10. Disability.

Provincial administration: Provinces are graded largely by population, but there are additional political factors influencing the assignation. Grade 1 is the largest, and grade 3 is the smallest. Wardak is classified as grade 3. The grade affects the size of the governor's office, as well as the position grades of the staff. *A Guide to Government in Afghanistan* and *Subnational Administration in Afghanistan: Assessment and Recommendations for Action*, two recent publications published by the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) and The World Bank (2004), give a useful overview of provincial administration. Wardak province is one of the six case studies in the two publications.

3. WARLORDS AND OTHER POWER HOLDERS

"… The American attack assumed a military strategy that avoided ground combat and the resulting threat to U.S. forces. The strategy of aerial bombardment, while capable of punishing the Taliban, lacked the ground troops necessary to secure territory. To carry out this task, the United States needed local troops, and for this the United States physically brought back the warlords, rearmed them, financed them, supported them militarily, and reinstalled them in power. The CIA simply handed suitcases of cash to warlords around the country. This investment allowed local commanders to resume their former positions and rearm themselves, ostensibly to take on the Taliban. It also gave them the seed money to become self-sufficient by engaging in smuggling, drug trafficking, and general criminal activity. Predictably, their rule has been nasty and brutal, as grimly documented in numerous accounts gathered by Human Rights Watch researchers and others from throughout Afghanistan over the past two years.
… One thing that unites the Taliban and local warlords who are ostensibly allied with Karzai's government or U.S. forces is their opposition to any legitimate political process in Afghanistan that could return peace and civility to the country."

Sam Zia-Zarifi, Human Rights Watch World Report, 2004

"The United States is betting that the same men who caused Afghanistan so much misery in the past will somehow lead it to democracy and stability in the future. The evidence, however, suggests the opposite is happening. Opportunities have been lost, goodwill squandered, and lessons of history ignored…
… the ferocious killing of the mid-1990s. They [the warlords] still maintain private armies and private jails and are reaping vast amounts of money from Afghanistan's illegal opium trade - valued at close to $2.3 billion last year – as well as from extortion and other rackets.
… The warlords have now ruled the country for two years, and Afghanistan seems to be degenerating into a sort of narco-state, which could spin out of control… The warlords have stolen peoples' homes, arbitrarily arrested their enemies, and tortured them in private jails… The main victims of all this have been ordinary Afghans.
… If Washington really wants to help, it must abandon its policy of working with the warlords and factional leaders of the Northern Alliance. Sayyaf, Fahim, and their men have nothing to offer Afghanistan that would help the country move forward. Concessions made to the warlords will be met only with demands for more concessions."

Kathy Gannon, Afghanistan Unbound, Foreign Affairs,
May/June 2004

Who Controls Subnational Administration?

District and provincial officials interviewed felt that Kabul's influence was very limited at the subnational level:

"It's only in name that we have a system of government – it doesn't exist in reality. I'm the acting governor but I have no authority. I can only sign but I have no feeling of responsibility – I don't have the power to say 'no.'" (Acting provincial governor)

"Mujahidin commanders still hold power. All the mujahidin groups are getting stronger again because they don't think the government will do anything against them." (Provincial governor)

"The international community made a big mistake by giving a clear mandate and strong support for regional warlords to rebuild their bases of power. Mujahidin commanders were appointed to some key positions. Within 18 months, the government couldn't change governors, commanders, chiefs of police." (Provincial mayor)

From A Guide to Government in Afghanistan, AREU & The World Bank, 2004

The Importance of Disarmament

"In one district the head of the education department was replaced. But because he had armed supporters he was reappointed in three days." (Teacher)

"If you want good administration, the first thing you need to do is disarmament. There's a big difference between saying and doing. We've heard a lot about disarmament on the radio, but we are seeing nothing." (Citizens group)

"The two biggest issues are disarmament and salaries. Until there is disarmament we won't get good security, and until government employees earn enough to survive on and get paid regularly the government system cannot function properly. If these two things are done the law will be ruling – today the Kalashnikov is the law." (Deputy head of police)

"If I don't have a commander around, immediately I become strong and get respect. If there are armed people around, I can't say anything." (District governor)

"If higher authorities accept disarmament then lower authorities will. If higher authorities don't accept, lower ones won't either. If those who have power at the centre agree to disarmament, everyone lower down the chain of command will accept. Those with power to construct and destruct at the centre are the problem, not those at the provincial and district levels." (District governor.)

"Unless the commander issue is dealt with no one will be successful in rebuilding Afghanistan." (Deputy governor)

From A Guide to Government in Afghanistan, AREU & The World Bank, 2004

Formally, Afghanistan is one of the most centralised states in the world. In reality, however, the country has become highly fragmented during the last 25 years, with regional leaders, so-called warlords, and local commanders operating in relatively distinct geographic areas and, at times, cooperating in loose alliances to gain control of, or to resist, the centre. President Karzai and his government have weak national institutions, and they lack military, administrative and financial control in major parts of the country.

The power of the warlords and commanders rests not only on military strength, but also, to a large extent, on financial strength coming from a variety of sources, not least the narcotics

trade, customs revenues, land and property seizures, abuses related to water and irrigation, and unofficial taxation, including taxes on productive activities and transport. Their power may also be based on personal, ethnic, factional, and historical loyalties.

When MSF (Médicins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders), the medical humanitarian NGO, decided to leave Afghanistan in July 2004 after 24 years of service in the country, its principal complaint was that the Afghan government had failed to act on evidence that local commanders were behind the deliberate attack with grenades and gunfire leading to the murders on 2 June 2004 of five members of its staff in the north-western province of Badghis. In a press release, MSF wrote:

> "Although government officials have presented MSF with credible evidence that local commanders conducted the attack, they have neither detained nor publicly called for their arrest. The lack of government response to the killings represents a failure of responsibility and an inadequate commitment to the safety of aid workers on its soil.
> ... After having worked nearly without interruption alongside the most vulnerable Afghan people since 1980, it is with outrage and bitterness that we take the decision to abandon them. But we simply cannot sacrifice the security of our volunteers while warring parties seek to target and kill humanitarian workers. Ultimately it is the sick and destitute that suffer."
> Marine Buissonnière, Secretary General of MSF, 28 July 2004

*

The following text is based on information from Pashtuns in Maidan Shahr in June 2004 and web sites. Regrettably, I have not been able to collect much information, within the time-frame for this survey, on warlords and other real power holders in the Hazara community in Wardak. The **real power holders** among the Pashtuns in Wardak are the big landlords. There is no major warlord, but there are several small armed groups with local power. Provincial governors are usually external, with limited power.

One of the most powerful and popular men among Pashtuns in Wardak is **Haji Mohammad Musa Hotak**, an Islamic cleric from Jalrez District (Zaiwalat village). During the Taliban, he was a commander and Deputy Minister of Planning. He was asked by the Taliban leaders to attack the Hazaras, but he refused to do so. He was seen as more powerful than the Provincial Governor, until 5 May 2004 when he and his brother (see below) demobilised some one hundred fighters and handed over hundreds of assault rifles, machine guns and rockets to the government, in a ceremony attended by officers from the US military forces and ISAF.

Two months after the ceremony, former Taliban commander **Ghulam Mohammad Hotak,** his brother Musa Hotak and nephew were detained by the Americans "because they have links to the Taliban." **Lieutenant General Abdul Basir Salangi, the Chief of Police,** said American soldiers surrounded Hotak's house in a village, after dark on Saturday 17 July 2004. Helicopters came in the morning and took him away. After that, up to 700 people spent nine hours demonstrating in front of the government offices in Maidan Shahr, chanting for Hotak's release. (AP, 18 July 2004). According to Xinhua (18 July 2004), there were rumours about heavy exchange of fire between coalition troops and supporters of the local commander Ghulam Mohammad. The gun battle was said to have lasted for one hour, and resulted in five dead people, including two Americans.

Ghulam Rohani Nangyalai, an English-speaking Pashtun elder and former commander, has links to Haji Musa Hotak. Nangyalai is a landlord, reportedly highly respected by many Pashtuns in Wardak.

General Zafaruddin from the Jelga sub-district is the Government Commander of Wardak. Reportedly, he is not liked by the local people. He used to be a Hezb-e-Islami commander. After the fall of the Taliban, he switched to the Northern Alliance. In February 2002, there was severe fighting with many casualities between followers of Nangyalai and Zafaruddin.

Commander Amanullah was a respected Hezb-e-Islami commander in Wardak. He was arrested and imprisoned in early April 2004. According to the US military spokesman Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty, Amanullah is still a 'senior commander' with the Hezb-e-Islami, which has joined the Taliban in vowing to drive foreign troops out of the country and oust President Hamid Karzai. (Las Vegas Sun, 5 April 2004)

Abdullah Wardak, the Minister of Martyrs and Disabled, comes from Wardak. He is an ally of the fundamentalist warlord Abdul Rasoul Sayyaf who has a horrendous record of abusing human rights. Sayyaf is the founder of the Ittihad-e-Islami Party.

Alhaj-Qazi-Raz Mohammad (Dalili) is the **Provincial Governor of Wardak.** Earlier, he was the Provincial Governor of Paktia. He is a former judge from Ghazni. He used to be a Jamiat commander.

The Taliban. There are still remnants of the Taliban in Wardak. In Pashtun areas of the province, there is a growing sympathy among ordinary people for the Taliban. (My own interviews in June 2004; IWPR 14 September 2004)

In the Behsud districts, most Hazaras say they will vote for the Hazara **Haji Mohammed Mohaqeq,** born in 1957 in Balkh, in the presidential election. (IWPR, 14 September 2004) According to the Jamestown Foundation (Eurasia Daily Monitor, 28 July 2004), Mohaqeq's stand against the establishment and his candidacy opposing Karzai have made him a hero among the Hazaras. Other sources speak of him as a warlord with a shameful record of abusing human rights in the past. According to the BBC (6 October 2004), Mohaqeq has a very loyal following among the Hazaras and is also likely to get many votes from Hazaras still living as refugees in Iran and Pakistan.

President Karzai's Hazara running mate for the post as Second Vice President in the presidential election is **Karim Khalili**. He was born in 1950 in Behsud. According to the BBC (25 January 2002), he is a former teacher, warlord and spiritual leader of the Hazara. Khalili has served as Governor of Bamian. Currently, he is the leader of the Hezb-e-Wahdat Islami (Unity Party) and Second Vice President of Afghanistan.

Women in power. There are no women in powerful positions at the provincial or district levels. When I attended the shura* in Maidan Shahr on 6 June 2004, some 20 members participated in the meeting chaired by the Provincial Governor. Only two of the participants were Hazaras, **Mr Nek Mohammad Shah Nori** and **Ms Nafisa Naseeb** from Behsud II. Nafisa was the only woman in the shura that day. (She felt that almost all international assistance to Wardak goes to Pashtun areas, and hardly anything to Hazara areas.)

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* The Shura had been summoned to discuss the government's poppy eradication programme in Wardak. The members of the Shura were furious with the ongoing eradication.

Religious leaders. There is no religious leader with a major following in Wardak.

*

Postscript. The presidential election on 9 October 2004 was carried out peacefully in Wardak. The security precautions were tight, and the voter turnout was high. According to the Institute of War and Peace Reporting (26 October 2004), the preliminary results reflected broadly the ethnic composition of Wardak: the Pashtun Karzai got 61 percent of the vote, the Hazara Mohaqeq got 32 percent and the Tajik Qanuni got three percent (although second nationally). 42 percent of the voters in Wardak were women.

4. THE SECURITY SITUATION FOR NGOs

> "There is widespread agreement among Afghans and international observers that there can be no reconstruction without security, and there can be no security without reconstruction. In Afghanistan, as in other post-conflict situations, construction crews cannot build roads, clinics, or schools if they face threatening forces; armed groups will not give up the way of the gun unless they can make a living and protect their families and livelihood without it."
>
> Sam Zia-Zarifi, Human Rights Watch World Report, 2004

Security has been deteriorating in Wardak during the last year. Girls' schools supported by SCA have been attacked. (See also Chapter 8. Education, below) So-called 'night letters', hand-written posters, threatening UN and government workers involved in the election process have been circulated. In Behsud, however, people say they have no security worries regarding the election. (IWPR, 14 September 2004)

Three weeks before the presidential elections on 9 October 2004, ANSO (The Afghanistan Non-Governmental Organisation Security Office) wrote in its weekly report that insurgent infiltration, movements and preparations continue in Wardak. Travel and work in higher risk areas, such as the southern and western parts of Wardak, should be minimised.

> "**Extreme caution is advised in this province.** Due to insurgent infiltration and movement, the security situation is tense and unstable in this province. Maidan Shahr District is experiencing significant insurgent activity. The likely plan of insurgents is to disrupt elections in this province and to support operations in Kabul and surrounding areas. Therefore Wardak province is not expected to be safe for NGOs. If NGOs choose to go, ANSO strongly advises travelling in unmarked vehicles. It must be noted that we anticipate a significant increase in hostile activity and attacks on deliberately chosen and opportune targets.
>
> **Ammunition confiscation.** 7 September. Maydan Shahr. NSD allegedly discovered a cache of ammunition comprising of 20 AK-47s, 46 mortars, three RPG rounds, 300 anti-aircraft machinegun rounds and 1000 rounds of heavy machinegun.
>
> **Arrest.** PRP. 7 September. Night time. Saydabad District, Tangi Valley. An unconfirmed report stated that two armed men were apprehended by the NSD. According to the report, they were staff members of Commander Din Mohd Jerat from Kabul. They were apparently travelling illegally from Logar and had no documentation to travel in Tangi.
>
> **Rocket attack.** 10 September. 0130Hrs. Saydabad District. Two rockets landed close to a residential house in Sheikh Abad village. No casualties or damages reported.
>
> **Threat.** Maidan Shahr District. 12 September. Unconfirmed reports indicate that JEMB personnel are being trained to plant explosive devices at compounds, polling sites and centres on the day of elections. These reports are currently being investigated."
>
> ANSO Weekly Report, 10-16 September 2004

5. WOMEN AND HUMAN RIGHTS

> "Women and girls bear some of the worst effects of Afghanistan's insecurity. Conditions are generally better than under the Taliban, but women and girls continue to face severe governmental and social discrimination. Those who organise protests or criticise local rulers face threats and violence. Soldiers and police routinely harass women and girls, even in Kabul city. Many women and girls are afraid to remove the burqa. Because soldiers are targeting women and girls, many are staying indoors, especially in rural areas, making it impossible for them to attend school, go to work, or actively participate in the country's reconstruction. The majority of school-age girls in Afghanistan are still not enrolled in school."
>
> From Human Rights Watch Report, January 2002

Amnesty International published a report called "'No one listens to us and no one treats us as human beings': Justice denied to women" in October 2003. In the report, Amnesty International expressed grave concern by the extent of violence faced by women and girls in Afghanistan. The risk of rape and sexual violence by members of armed factions and former combatants was still high. Forced marriage, particularly of girl children, and violence against women in the family were widespread in many areas of the country. These crimes of violence continued with the active support or passive complicity of state agents, armed groups, families and communities. This continuing violence against women in Afghanistan was seen as a cause of immense suffering and a denial of women's fundamental human rights. The following excerpts (edited) come from the report:

- **Violence against women.** Women and girls are vulnerable to rape, sexual violence and abduction. They are threatened with violence in every aspect of their lives, both in public and private, in the community and the family. Violence against women in the family, including physical abuse, is widely reported. The extent of the problem emerges more clearly in hospitals than in any other state institution, when severely injured women seek treatment.
- **Adultery.** In certain regions of Afghanistan, women accused of adultery are routinely detained, as are those who attempt to assert their right under Afghan law and international standards to marry a spouse of their own choice. "Running away from home", adultery and other unlawful sexual activity, including consensual sex outside marriage, are referred to as **zina** crimes. They are subject to criminal prosecution. (The zina offence is part of the Afghan Penal Code.) Some women in such circumstances are also at risk of being killed if released. In some cases, she may be killed, but her death is made to appear as suicide.
- **Impunity** and the failure to provide justice and protection from abuse perpetuate violence against women as the perpetrators do not consider themselves criminal.
- **So-called honour crimes.** The Penal Code also permits mitigation of sentences for murders claimed to have been committed in defence of honour. For example, a husband who murders his wife when she is found committing adultery is exempted from punishment for murder on that basis.
- **Protection and shelters for women at risk** have not been created, and legal aid provision remains entirely adequate.
- **Un-Islamic.** Progress and emancipation for women have been characterised by some political forces as un-Islamic and contrary to Shari'a (Islamic law).
- **Forced and underage marriage** also occurs when women and girls are given away into marriage as a means of dispute resolution by informal justice means, for example in cases of indebtedness.

Preface

As the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) embarked upon two new national strategies, the Basic Package of Health Service (BPHS) in Kunduz and Wardak provinces, and the National Solidarity Programmes (NSP) in Wardak, a certain geographical focusing emerged compared to our previous presence in 21 of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan. Historically, much of the four major programmes of SCA (health, education, disability and agriculture) has been implemented on a needs base without a coherent strategic model for the future. In the new Afghan environment, the new strategies express concerted efforts between authorities, donors and implementers. The new strategies also open up for dismantling of old ones, as other actors take over where SCA used to operate. This trend is envisaged to continue in the near future, as national authorities may take an increasing responsibility for service delivery.

The emerging geographical concentration calls for more profound insight, knowledge and information about regions where we are to work in the coming years. Socio-economic conditions and livelihoods, demography, topography, governance and power-holding, services available and infrastructure are some conditions that make up pre-conditions and framework, together with inputs by other actors, agencies, donors and the Afghan authorities.

To that end, SCA asked Katarina Larsson to produce comprehensive provincial surveys on Kunduz and Wardak. It is a pleasure to see the requested products completed and ready for dissemination. They offer interesting reading for SCA board and staff members and others involved in the two provinces.

The author has taken great care to make sure that facts are correct with thorough scrutiny of data, often cross-checked by SCA staff members, to the extent possible. However, the surveys are the responsibility of the author alone and do not necessarily reflect views and opinions of SCA.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Katarina Larsson for her work that goes beyond the contractual agreement as a consultant. It comprises a large proportion of commitment to SCA and devotion to the subject. The reading of the provincial reviews offers comprehensive and up-dated information on aspects relevant for the efforts of SCA to contribute with humanitarian actions and development in Afghanistan.

Stockholm December 2004

Bengt Kristiansson
Secretary General of SCA

- **The legal age for marriage** in Afghanistan for men is 18 and for women 16 years of age. (Many people do not know their exact age.) Age of marriage varies between urban and rural areas and according to ethnic background and economic circumstances. Often, girls and women are treated as an economic asset, with families receiving a price from the family of the groom. There are reports of underage marriage, with girls as young as ten and even younger, from Wardak. Rural girls normally drop out of school after marriage. Many adolescent girls die in childbirth, as their bodies have not reached full physical maturity.
- **Loss of virginity outside marriage** is devastating for unmarried girls and young women.
- **Rape.** No support or professional services are available to women victims of rape. Women coming forward to report rape risk being accused of adultery and detained for zina under the Penal Code. A common form of suicide by rape victims is self-immolation (death by fire).
- **Women prisoners.** There are several unconfirmed reports of sexual abuse of women prisoners in official detention centres and police stations.
- **Women's rights.** Women are largely unaware of their rights under international law and also, to an extent, their rights under Afghan and Shari'a law. In many communities, women cannot leave the home without an accompanying male relative, so-called **mahram**. To be seen to travel alone might result in loss of reputation. In rural areas, there is a lack of communications and transportation infrastructure. Telephone facilities are rare. Many women live in extreme isolation, further aggravated by illiteracy and lack of money.
- **Lack of certainty and consistency over legal sources.** An Afghan women's rights activist with experience from legal proceedings said: "Judges will choose between written law, custom and Shari'a according to which suits the interests of the man."

*

In general, the human rights situation, as described above by Amnesty International, is applicable to **Wardak**, according to NSP staff in Wardak. Women are **denied fundamental human rights**. Underage marriages and forced marriages exist. Domestic violence is common. In some cases, young unmarried women or wives must not be seen even by a brother-in-law. Freedom of movement is highly restricted. Most women in Wardak live in extreme seclusion. Even NSP women staff find it threatening to walk to the office in Maidan Shahr. Fewer and fewer women dare or allowed to venture out of the home. Mahram and chadri (burqa) are 'musts' not only for Pashtun women, but also for Hazara women, especially unmarried women. In some Hazara communities, women can be seen working in the fields. This can be interpreted as a sign of extreme poverty.

According to Dr Sima Samar, former Minister of Women's Affairs and present Director of the Afghan Human Rights Commission, **Hazara women** in the Besoud districts suffer from the same problems as women in other parts of Afghanistan, namely economic hardship, forced marriages, domestic violence, lack of education and awareness, lack of health services, and hard work. (Personal communication with Dr Samar in December 204)

The school enrolment rates for girls in Wardak are much lower than the national average rates for girls. See Chapter 8. Education. See also comments on women's situation in other chapters of this survey.

The official "mission" of the **Ministry of Women's Affairs** is **"to ensure that Afghan women's legal, economic, social, political, and civic rights including their right to be free from all forms of violence and discrimination are respected, promoted and fulfilled."** For 1383 (2004/05), the Ministry and the 29 Provincial Departments of Women's Affairs (DWA) have a total budget of $1.25 million, a drop in the ocean.

The Provincial Department of Women's Affairs (DWA) was established in Wardak in 2003 to focus mainly on the rights of women and job opportunities for women. The DWA Centre is located in Maidan Shahr, and headed by Ms Fatima, a newly recruited Tajik woman from Kabul. She is assisted by three staff members.

6. THE OPIUM ECONOMY

After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, opium has become Afghanistan's leading economic activity, accounting for half of the nation's gross domestic product and five times the annual budget of the central government. (Pakistan Tribune, 22 June 2004) It is a source of funds for the Taliban and their allies, as well as the Al Qaeda and powerful warlords and commanders. Moreover, top-level government officials are deeply involved in the opium economy.

The World Bank (2004) points out that "the impact of the drug industry on Afghanistan's economy, polity and society is profound, including some short-run economic benefits for the rural population and macro-economy but major adverse effects on security, political normalisation and state-building."

The 2004 opium harvest is expected to be the biggest ever in Afghanistan, and the proportion of opium refined to heroin inside Afghanistan is continuing to rise. Now up to 90 percent of the illegal drug exports from Afghanistan is heroin, according to UNODC. The drug industry has a strong interest in maintaining an environment of insecurity and lawlessness.

> "... Two farmers out of three interviewed in October [2003], shortly before planting time, stated they intended to increase significantly their opium poppy cultivation in 2004. This intention was manifested throughout the country, with availability of land often appearing to be the only limiting factor.
>
> Persistent poverty, high opium prices and access to credit (from traffickers) through the advance sale of the future opium harvest are reported as the main reasons for continuing, or even increasing, opium production in 2004. Farmers revealed a clear awareness of the government ban on opium production; this survey however shows that the short-term benefits of this activity (high revenues) have, until now, continued to outweigh the potential risks (from law enforcement measures) it presents to them.
>
> The results of this survey impart the unequivocal warning that the illegal opium production will continue to thrive unless resolute actions are taken: alternative livelihoods for farmers, eradication of opium fields and interdiction of traffickers. The formidable threat which the opium economy poses to peace, stability and socio-economic recovery in Afghanistan will otherwise continue to increase."
>
> From Afghanistan Farmers' Intentions Survey 2003/2004, Mr Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2004

Some other data from the Afghanistan Farmers' Intentions Survey 2003/2004 are as follows:

- The opium harvest in 2003 was 3,600 metric tons, the second largest ever (after1999).
- The harvest accounted for more than 75 percent of the world's illicit opium production [and 95 percent of Europe's consumption].
- 69 percent of all farmers interviewed in poppy growing regions reported intentions to increase poppy cultivation in 2004, 16 percent to keep it stable and only 4 percent to reduce it (11 percent did not answer).
- 75 percent of all village headmen interviewed expected opium cultivation to increase in their villages in 2004.
- Intended increases were reported from all parts of the country, but were particularly pronounced in the northern provinces, and least pronounced in the east. **Wardak**

showed a slight decrease (less than 10 percent) for the eastern districts, and an increase of up to 100 percent in the western districts.

The main reasons to grow opium poppy were:

- to alleviate poverty (31 percent of the farmers' replies; 30 percent of headmen replies)
- high opium prices (30 percent farmers; 28 percent headmen)
- to get credit (salaam arrangements, i.e. advance sale of the future harvest, important for the very poor and indebted in the absence of a rural credit system) (18 percent farmers; 18 percent headmen)
- to purchase 'luxury' items, e.g. motor-cycles (7 percent farmers; 6 percent headmen)
- expected compensations from eradication (6 percent farmers; 6 percent headmen)

The main reasons **not** to grow were:

- it is against Islam (24 percent farmers; 17 percent headmen)
- it is illegal (23 percent farmers; 17 percent headmen)
- fear of eradication (17 percent farmers; 16 percent headmen)
- fear of imprisonment/fines (16 percent farmers; 16 percent headmen)
- unfavourable climatic/soil conditions (11 percent farmers; 7 percent headmen)

The UNODC Survey showed that in 2003, the average income from poppy was $12,700 per hectare, much higher than the income from wheat, the main alternative crop, which was $222 per hectare. The relationship given by the World Bank (2004) is 27:1.

> "We warned people we would punish them if they grew poppy, but in some areas local commanders encouraged farmers to grow, saying central government is week and won't do anything. They have their own interests in mind as they tax the poppy. There's now no war on so the commanders are looking for alternative livelihoods." (Provincial governor)
>
> "Poppy cultivation and processing is strongly supported by commanders and police. They are very involved and take their share. No one could produce poppy if they did not allow it… opium and heroin is transported in with official plates." (District administrator)
>
> "The poppy business is linked to important people in Kabul and there is no support from Kabul to fight with commanders – they have more money than we do." (General of provincial garrison)
>
> From A Guide to Government in Afghanistan, AREU & The World Bank, 2004

In summary, in spite of religious and cultural aversion, poppy cultivation is attractive to farmers for many reasons, including

- good income and guaranteed market
- credit and other inputs are available from the traffickers
- poppies have higher drought-resistant qualities than most crops
- easy to transport and non-perishable
- limited law enforcement

Since most rural poor households depend more on wage income than farm income, they benefit from high demand for labour for poppy cultivation and harvesting. Skilled poppy workers may earn up to $12 per day during the harvest period, as compared to $2-3 for unskilled workers in other fields. (The World Bank, 2004)

Women and girls. According to the World Bank (2004), women play a very important role in poppy cultivation in northern and eastern Afghanistan. Opium production is labour intensive and women are involved in planting and weeding, thinning, lancing the capsules, collecting the opium, clearing the fields, breaking the capsules and removing the seeds, and processing by-products like oil and soap. Due to local labour shortages, women are, in fact, often for the first time being paid wages. On the tragic side, young daughters are often given away to settle debts related to opium.

*

According to Mirwais Yasini, the Director of the Afghan Counternarcotics Department in Kabul, there are more than 30,000 opium addicts in Kabul. Few will admit that they are addicted since opium is considered unclean and is forbidden by Islam. Yasini also states that poppy growers, brokers and traffickers enjoy the protection of police chiefs, militia commanders, provincial governors and even Cabinet ministers. (Pakistan Tribune, 22 June 2004)

Initially, the British which are leading international efforts to combat Afghan drugs, offered farmers money to destroy their poppy crops. As word spread, many grew poppies deliberately, expecting British cash. When the cash did not come they sold the opium. In 2004, there has been widespread confusion about Afghan government policy among farmers. It has been officially decreed that 25 percent of this year's crop should be eradicated, and many farmers have interpreted that to mean that the other 75 percent are legal.

Until very recently, neither the US-led coalition forces nor the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force have made counter-narcotics part of their operational mandate.

At a congressional hearing in Washington D.C. on 23 September 2004, an official from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs announced that the CIA's Counter Narcotics Centre had estimated last year's poppy crop at 61,000 hectares, with a likely increase to some 100,000 hectares this year. This would mean **a dramatic increase.** There were record levels of poppy production in areas not previously used for this purpose. Pentagon official Peter Rodman said: "We know that profits from the production of illegal narcotics flow into the coffers of warlord militias, corrupt government officials and extremist forces." (BBC/Radio Free Europe, 24 Sept 2004)

Wardak

"... two dozen farmers watched sullenly from the edge of a neatly planted plot as a squad of government eradicators, wielding hoes and scythes, chopped down their carefully tended opium poppy shoots. On all sides, Afghan police and security guards hired by the U.S. Embassy stood watch against attack.

"The government has taken away our guns, and now it is destroying our livelihoods," protested Nasir Ahmad, 45, a sunburned farmer in the village of Kote Ashro. "We have agreed to turn in our weapons in the name of peace, but we don't have enough water to grow any other crops but poppy. Why are they bringing this cruelty on us now?

By most standards, Wardak should be a model for the rest of Afghanistan. It is the only place in the country where militia disarmament, poppy eradication and voter registration – three efforts backed by the United Nations and Western governments – are taking place simultaneously.

But some residents say they feel this ruggedly beautiful, impoverished province is less a showcase than a victim. They complain that it has been singled out for unpopular projects demanded by international powers because it is close to Kabul, economically vulnerable and without a dominant leader to resist the pressure.

... could sharpen anti-government sentiment. It could also undermine provincial support for national elections...

Wardak, just southwest of Kabul, might seem an ideal place to make a multipronged push for progress. It has enormous agricultural potential and strategically straddles the newly constructed north-south highway. It is dominated by ethnic Pashtuns, who make up the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan but have felt neglected by the current government.

... Poppy is a relatively new crop in Wardak, and thus the region was deemed a relatively painless spot to initiate the government's new program to forcibly eradicate opium poppies...

... the simultaneous start of the disarmament and anti-poppy programs has aroused resentment in a region where poor farmers and ex-militia fighters are often one and the same, and where ethnic Pashtuns are suspicious of being abused by ethnic Tajik factions in the transitional government set up by the United Nations in 2001.

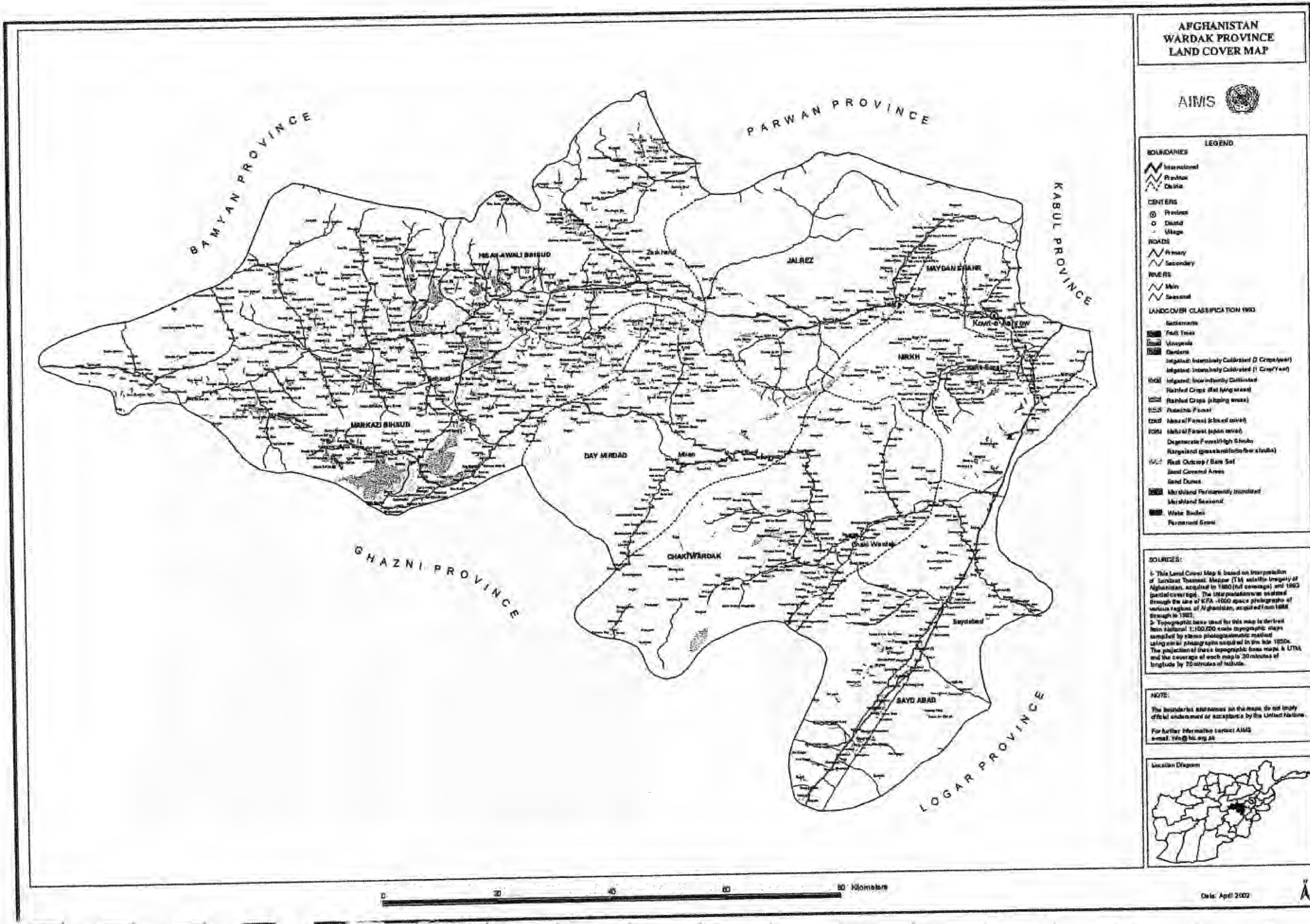
Many residents said they favoured disbanding all militias and collecting their weapons and that they understood that poppy is used to create addictive drugs and is outlawed in Islam. But they questioned why Wardak, whose farmers grow far less poppy than those in many other provinces, was the first to be targeted after two years of official indulgence."

From "Project Put Strain On Afghan Province: Disarmament and Poppy Eradication Leave Residents Feeling Persecuted", by Pamela Constable, Washington Post, 24 May 2004

After many delays, the first US funded poppy eradication team set up camp in Shabaskheil, some 45 km southwest of Kabul, in central **Wardak** in May 2004. A local school teacher and part-time poppy grower explained that traffickers from Kandahar introduced the drug in this area several years ago. They offered seeds, fertilisers and credit to local farmers who switched from corn and wheat to poppies. The teacher was happy to have earned $5,000 from opium sales in 2003 (cp. teacher salaries in Chapter 8. Education, below). The eradication team was met by land mines buried in the fields by villagers. One farmer said: "We don't like the drug business. It only brings problems, but there is a drought, and no one has enough money. This is the only way to make a living." (Pakistan Tribune, 22 June 2004)

In a press release dated 29 June 2004, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul announced: "The U.S. has initiated eradication and interdiction programs in Helmand, Nangarhar, Kandahar and Wardak provinces. 668 hectares of opium has been eradicated in Wardak Province."

Five months later, The Economist (18 November 2004) reported from Wardak: "America also issued an American security company, DynCorp, with a $50m contract to train an Afghan eradication team. The team's 400 members got two weeks' training – long enough, says one diplomat, 'to learn how to drive a tractor and point a gun.'. Operating in central Wardak province, it caused chaos. Farmers fired rockets at the team's camp, and sowed their fields with land mines. Yet it destroyed 1,000 hectares of poppy in six weeks, and should be expanded next year. This week, America announced an additional $780m for drug control efforts."


AFGHANISTAN
WARDAK PROVINCE
LAND COVER MAP
AIMS
BAMYAN PROVINCE
PARWAN PROVINCE
KABUL PROVINCE
GHAZNI PROVINCE
LOGAR PROVINCE
HISA-I-AWALI BIHSUD
MARKAZI BIHSUD
DAY MIRDAD
JALREZ
MAYDAN SHAHR
NIRKH
CHAK-I-WARDAK
SAYD ABAD
Kowt-e-Ashrow
Chaki Wardak
Saydabad
LEGEND
BOUNDARIES
International
Province
District
CENTERS
Province
District
Village
ROADS
Primary
Secondary
RIVERS
Main
Seasonal
LANDCOVER CLASSIFICATION 1993
Settlements
Fruit Trees
Vineyards
Gardens
Irrigated: Intensively Cultivated (2 Crops/year)
Irrigated: Intensively Cultivated (1 Crop/Year)
Irrigated: Intermittently Cultivated
Rainfed Crops (flat lying areas)
Rainfed Crops (sloping areas)
Pistachio Forest
Natural Forest (closed cover)
Natural Forest (open cover)
Degenerate Forest/High Shrubs
Rangeland (grassland/forbs/low shrubs)
Rock Outcrop / Bare Soil
Sand Covered Areas
Sand Dunes
Marshland Permanently Inundated
Marshland Seasonal
Water Bodies
Permanent Snow
SOURCES:
1- This Land Cover Map is based on interpretation of Landsat Thematic Mapper (TM) satellite imagery of Afghanistan, acquired in 1990 (full coverage) and 1993 (partial coverage). The interpretation was assisted through the use of KFA -1000 space photographs of various regions of Afghanistan, acquired from 1988 through to 1992.
2- Topographic base used for this map is derived from National 1:100,000 scale topographic maps compiled by stereo photogrammetric method using aerial photographs acquired in the late 1950s. The projection of these topographic base maps is UTM and the coverage of each map is 30 minutes of longitude by 20 minutes of latitude.
NOTE:
The boundaries and names on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
For further information contact AIMS
Location Diagram
0
20
40
60
80 Kilometers
Date: April 2002

7. AGRICULTURE

Since 2002, there has been an extraordinary growth in agricultural production in Afghanistan. Total cereal production (mainly wheat) increased by 82 percent in 2002, and by an additional 50 percent in 2003, reaching 5.4 million tons, theoretically covering the food grain consumption needs for Afghanistan. The 2003 cereal production was estimated to be one of the largest ever recorded. Also other crops, including potatoes and melons, were extremely successful. A return to normal rainfall in parts of the country after several years of drought, and improved availability of seeds and fertilisers have facilitated the growth. Production of fruits, vegetables and livestock products has also increased in the country as a whole since 2002, but is not yet back at pre-conflict levels.

Agriculture, half of the Afghan economy, is critical for future growth, poverty reduction, and export development. According to the World Bank (2004), there is more or less consensus on the main problems and constraints which need to be acted upon to accelerate agricultural growth. Key priority areas include the following:

- **Rehabilitation and management of water resources**
  In addition to civil engineering and hydrology challenges, there are problems with distribution of the available water. Who gets how much, when and where? The traditional community-based mechanisms for water management and maintenance have been negatively affected by local commanders who often do not respect the water rights and/or the authority of the **mirabs** (water masters).
- **Agricultural research and extension**
- **Facilitation of modern post-harvest handling and marketing**
- **Improved access to rural finance, including micro-credits**
- **Land tenure insecurity**

> **Land Tenure Issues in Afghanistan**
> "Information about how rural land is distributed and under what conditions is incomplete, but there are important regional differences. Disturbed settlement and tenure insecurity render information unreliable beyond the short term. High rates of sharecropping by both landowners and landless and the ambivalent status of mortgaged plots make precise definition of owners difficult.
> ° Years of conflict have seriously disturbed land relations, de-securing farm and pasture rights in some areas, and jeopardising the ability of administrators or courts to manage or uphold rights fairly.
> ° Landlessness and indebtedness in the farming sector have been longstanding features of Afghan agriculture. Population growth and land shortages, opium poppy production, ethnic tension, insecurity, and more recently the drought remain potent drivers to land grabbing, landlessness and destitution.
> ° Pasture land is a principal source of conflict. Competition over this valuable resource engenders conflict among settled and nomadic land users and ethnic and territorial interests. Issues of common property rights also arise.
> ° A plural legal basis to land rights exists, in the form of customary, religious, and state law, and with a great deal of overlap, some inconsistency, and much uncertainty as to norms in each body of law. Landowners variously use custom, Shariat, or evidence from the land register to demonstrate their rights.
> ° A clear system for land tenure administration does not exist. Administration (such as the formalisation of routine transfer of rights) falls, by default, to judges.
> ° There is currently no institutional focus for dealing with land tenure. The main discernible land policy of the Government is to restore land to those who owned the land in 1978. However, adoption of this strategy without addressing underlying grievances associated with how land was acquired will not provide a lasting resolution. A second main policy is to pursue

registration and entitlement, mainly to encourage investment. This deserves more thought in light of the failure of registration approaches to deliver tenure security."
Source: Wily (2003)   From "Afghanistan: State Building, Sustaining Growth, and Reducing Poverty. A Country Economic Report," The World Bank, 2004

There is a long history of **fighting over land** between Pashtuns and Hazaras in Wardak. The district of Jaghato is unique when is comes to land ownership. In this district, there are "mixed" Pashtun and Hazara villages, but the land is owned by Pushtuns and the Hazaras are workers.

In parts of the Behsud districts, commanders have 'grabbed' land from poor farmers. In July 2004, UNHCR reported that a land dispute caused fighting and human casualties in the Kajab area of Behsud I and II. "The dispute ended when the government sent a delegation to the area." (UNHCR, 1 July 2004)

The pastoralist Kuchis (nomads) are described by Refugees International (RI) as the most destitute, least regarded and least attended group in the Afghan population. During the recent years of drought, the Wardak Kuchis have lost most of their livestock. Many of them now live as internally displaced persons (IDPs) in camps outside Kandahar and in isolated refugee camps in Pakistan. Those Kuchis who still herd livestock have difficulties entering Hazara areas in Wardak. The local Hazaras are hostile to the Kuchis due to their association with the hated Taliban, and refuse the Kuchis entry to their traditional summer grazing lands in Wardak.

Landlessness and indebtedness. According to Christoplos (2004), studies show that indebtedness resulting in landlessness is an increasing problem. In Bamyan (bordering Behsud I and II), for example, it is estimated that over half of the rural population is landless or near landless. In many cases, indebtedness and destitution have forced poor Hazara families to leave their land. There are also many reports about destitute families being forced to give away their daughters into pre-mature marriages in settlement of debts. Large numbers of refugees and IDPs are unable to return home as they lack access to land and housing due to hostile occupation, fraudulent deeds and lack of effective property recording systems or adequate dispute resolution mechanisms.

"Many returnees Amnesty International spoke to have arrived back at their places of origin to find their land and/or houses occupied by other families, often with the backing of powerful local commanders.
... Unaccompanied women, in particular, often find themselves unable to access their land upon their return... Women are often denied access to traditional leaders, or even formal justice mechanisms, and can be severely disadvantaged in the absence of a male family member who is willing to plead the case on behalf of the female relative."
"Out of sight, out of mind: The fate of the Afghan returnees", Amnesty International, 2003

Regarding the impressive growth in agricultural production during the past two years, Christoplos (2004) comments: "The scattered but disturbing signs that this growth has resulted in limited improvement in livelihoods among the majority of rural people gives cause for grave concern. We simply do not know much about what is happening with regard to the third condition [Ability to challenge societal vested interests that seek to re-appropriate the benefits that accrue to the intended beneficiaries] for transforming pro-poor projects into pro-poor rural development. Fears of widespread and gross abuse of power in

local processes related to farming suggest a need to design and monitor agricultural interventions in relation to rights and protection agendas. The question is how." (The interested reader is referred to Christoplos excellent report quoted above.)

Women in agriculture. In most cases, female-headed households are extremely vulnerable. Security of tenure and of other social and economic assets is particularly fragile for women. In a survey, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) estimated that 13 percent of the women interviewed were widows. The national percentage of female-headed households is not known, but it may well be high since often young girls are married to elderly men, and large numbers of men have died during the war.

Women's involvement in agricultural production is considerable, though largely unrecorded and un-monetised. The World Bank (2004) stresses the vital need to understand the extent to which gender aspects impact on ownership, cultivation patterns, division of labour, post-harvesting processing, livestock raising, and dairy production.

> "Gender roles and relations are often attributed to 'culture,' but it must be remembered that 'culture' is not static and unchanging. People may wish to hold on to the idea of 'culture' as a form of identity, especially after years of turmoil and for many, the experience of living in another country. However, culture can change, sometimes in unexpected ways. For instance, as discussed earlier, it appears that while women's mobility was more restricted under the Taliban, some women became the main income earners in the family. It has also been shown that economic reasoning can sometimes play a larger role than cultural norms in determining the allocation of labour.
> ... Women's activities, perhaps especially in agriculture, are often invisible, partly as many are carried out inside the home or compound and partly as their activities are sometimes not discussed if they go against the socio-cultural norms of what women *should* be doing. More effort is needed to understand what women and men are doing in different places and how these roles both stem from and serve to reinforce gender relations, decision-making and well-being.
> ... Tackling gender inequity and improving livelihoods opportunities are not separate agendas but are inextricably connected, as they are both concerned with providing people with the opportunities for a decent life.
> ... A better understanding would assist programme targeting and could be used not only in programme design but also in monitoring and evaluation."
> From "Gender Roles in Agriculture: Case studies of five villages in northern Afghanistan," by Jo Grace, AREU, 2004

In the interesting AREU report "Gender Roles in Agriculture: Case studies of five villages in northern Afghanistan" (2004), Jo Grace shows how factors such as age, marital status, wealth/poverty and ethnic group can influence change and how flexible gender roles can be. Although the study was made in the north of Afghanistan, sections of it are of relevance also for the situation in Wardak.

Rural transport and trading. Poor roads and lack of security are severe obstacles for rural development. Afghan Pashtun trading and trucking groups have long played an important role in agricultural marketing throughout the country. They believe they are the biggest losers from the fall of the Taliban, and claim that trade volume has fallen due to the insecurity created by the re-emergence of the warlords. Under the Taliban there was a single tax on goods passing through their territories, now anything can happen. A series of incidents and harassment has emphasised their deep sense of insecurity. This has led to higher transaction costs and a vacuum of rural services in many rural area.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

> "Yet the people of Afghanistan are not on the brink of starvation, nor have they been in recent history, due mainly to widespread personal and private initiative. Afghans are a resourceful, resilient, creative, opportunity-seeking, and entrepreneurial people (as witnessed by the high incidence of labour migration, entrepreneurial activity wherever they are located, trading networks, and remittances). Their achievements in the face of adversity are noteworthy."
>
> From "Afghanistan: State Building, Sustaining Growth, and Reducing Poverty. A Country Economic Report," The World Bank, 2004

> "The strong economic and social linkages of Pashtun traders across regional borders make them a unique group with a lot of cash. Western diplomats in Kabul say the potential role the traders can play in the reconstruction and modernisation of Afghanistan is a largely untapped resource the government in Kabul has yet to recognise. Although their expressions of political partisanship remain muted by feared association with the Taliban, they say they are traders first, and Pashtuns later."
>
> From "Afghanistan: The Problem of Pashtun Alienation", ICG Report No. 62, August 2003

The karez system. Traditional karezes (also called qanats), an intricate irrigation system of underground water canals, have allowed agriculture to prosper in areas of Wardak for many centuries. They collect run-off, snowmelt, and subsoil water from the mountains and carry it down to the fertile plains. The karezes can extend long distances, deep beneath the surface. Vertical shafts every hundred metres or so enable maintenance teams to descend in the spring to repair the canals. During the years of war, many of the karezes in Wardak have been destroyed by bombs and/or lack of maintenance, thereby further aggravating the effects of the drought.

Severe drought. Most of Wardak has suffered from a severe drought for the last six years. Grain prices have doubled recently. Livestock herds are rapidly shrinking due to lack of water. In some areas, fruit trees are dying. Many who could afford it have left the area. Poor families have become indebted and landless. Males leave to work as migrant labourers elsewhere in Afghanistan, in neighbouring countries or in the Gulf states. Refugees in Iran and Pakistan remain where they are. Hundreds of trucks with wheat and cooking oil came to Ghazni and Wardak as food aid in August 2004. Substantially larger quantities of food aid will be needed for the winter in Wardak. (www.afgha.com, 14 September 2004)

According to **the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA)** for 2004, the current drought is the longest and most severe in Afghanistan's known climatic history. Based on market prices and satellite images of crop growth, NRVA estimates that 37 percent of the Afghan population will not be able to cover their basic food needs (at least 2,100 kcal per capita daily) and non-food needs up to the harvest in 2005. The corresponding figure the year before was 20 percent. In Wardak, the provincial percentage for 2004 is 38 percent, but in some districts it is much higher, e.g. in Behsud I it is 65 percent. There the situation is further aggravated by the lack of access to markets in the winter due to heavy snowfall and poor (if any) roads.

In the highly interesting AREU report "Out of Step? Agricultural Policy and Afghan Livelihoods" by Ian Christoplos (2004), **Hazarajat** (which includes Behsud I and II) is described as **a low potential area**. The area is characterised by subsistence farming on scarce and fragile arable lands, poverty, isolation, depopulation and poor market prospects. The population is dependent on migration and remittances, wage labour and food aid. However, opium poppy cultivation is booming in this setting. Potato cultivation in rotation with winter wheat is also successful.

The eastern parts of Wardak, on the other hand, have **a good agricultural potential** when rainfall is 'normal' and/or irrigation systems work. The Kabul – Kandahar Highway makes transport of agricultural surplus easy.

Crops: In addition to opium (see Chapter 6. The Opium Economy), crops grown in Wardak include wheat, barley, maize, rice, peas, chick peas, broad beans, lentils, turnip, carrots,

cucumber, potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, onion, garlic, radish, melon and watermelon. Sugar beet was introduced during the war. The most common types of fodder are lucerne, clover, bitter vetch and rape. Some tobacco is also grown. (Examples of wild flowers are narcissi and tulips.)

Orchards. Wardak is famous for its crisp and savoury apples, but war and drought have destroyed many orchards. During the Daoud years, with Dr Wakil as Minister of Agriculture, Nirkh District, for example, was often described as a beautiful garden with millions of fruit trees such as apples, apricots, plums, grapes, cherries and mulberries. Almonds and walnuts were also grown. Fruits and nuts are still grown, but many trees have died during the prolonged drought.

Fauna/livestock. Wolves, foxes, hares and deers are wild. Sheep with big tails and goats are important in the Hazarajat economy. The streams and rivers are filled with fish of different kinds. In remote areas, mules and donkeys are used for transportation. Camels are rare.

*

According to Christoplos (2004), Hazarajat has attracted several NGOs over the years, but most have had relatively small programmes. In agriculture, most programmes have been limited to to seed distribution. **Oxfam** and the **Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN)** are supporting some long-term rural development programmes. **FAO** is starting to implement a large and ambitious DfID-financed programme focussed on improving rural livelihoods through first developing shuras and other institutions to act as farmer organisations.

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) is distributing wheat seeds and providing extension services for contracted farmers in the Said Abad and Maidan Shahr districts.

CARE is cooperating with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) in the Capacity Building of Employment Generation Schemes (GES) Project. The European Union has granted $4.8M for this project "to build sustainable livelihoods for the most vulnerable families in twelve districts of six provinces." In Wardak, Behsud I and Chak are included. So far, labour intensive roads projects and irrigation and flood control systems have been planned. The short-term purpose is to provide income to the poorest groups in communities. The long-term purpose is to create income-enhancing community assets.

USAID/RAMP. In the summer of 2003, USAID started the three-year Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Programme (RAMP) aimed at increasing food security and incomes of rural people in thirteen provinces including Kunduz and Wardak. The programme has two principal objectives: to increase agricultural productivity and output, and to facilitate effective networks between producers, processors and markets. The main activities to reach these objectives are:

- **Expanding rural finance opportunities,** e.g. microfinance loans (in cooperation with the World Bank), ranging between $50 and $5,000 to support small agricultural and women-owned businesses. By August 2004, some 2,000 loans had been disbursed.
- **Improving rural infrastructure,** e.g. rehabilitation of farm-to-market roads, irrigation canals and dams.
- **Generating improved agricultural technology,** e.g. on-farm demonstration to illustrate the effectiveness of new crops, and improved irrigation and cultivation as well as post-

harvest techniques. Field demonstrations have included crops such as wheat, rice, onions, virus-free potatoes, peanuts, mung beans, canola and tomatoes.

- **Creating facilities to support markets,** e.g. establishment of village collection centres, wholesale markets and village/district market centres.
- **Developing the livestock industry,** including veterinary services, advice on animal nutrition, disease control and livestock management. In Jalrez, women have been trained in poultry management as an income-generating activity.

National Solidarity Programme (NSP). The NSP is a programme run by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) with funding from The World Bank/IDA. The objectives are to mobilise villages to discuss their needs and development priorities, prepare community development plans and project proposals and, after approval from MRRD, implement community development projects. The approach emphasises the establishment of democratic and representative Community Development Committees (CDCs) at the village level, thereby challenging some of the most central Afghan norms, namely gender relations and local-level power structures. SCA, in cooperation with Save the Children Sweden, has been selected by MRRD to act as the so-called Facilitating Partner (FP) for Wardak. So far, SCA has assisted in making General Community Profiles and an inventory of priorities in three districts, namely Said Abad, Maidan Shahr and Behsud II. According to ReliefWeb (26 April 2004), the first projects to be implemented included the building of a road, a micro hydroelectric plant, water supplies for drinking water and the cleaning of karezes. Presumably the agricultural sector will benefit from NSP.

8. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

> "The potential contribution of a revitalised education system to the resolution of Afghanistan's many difficult problems is immense. Education is at the core of the long-term programme to rebuild Afghanistan, enabling progress in all other development arenas as well as facilitating national unity. While the challenges facing the education system are enormous, there is a prevailing atmosphere of excitement, expectation, and determination in schools and communities throughout the country."
>
> Excerpt from A guide to Government in Afghanistan, AREU and The World Bank, 2004

Limited capacity and resources. However, the current education system has extremely limited capacity and resources such as teachers, textbooks, materials and buildings to produce good results. In Wardak, the government-funded education **budget per student** and school-year was 61 Afs ($1.25) in 1382 (2003). At all levels, qualified educators and managers are scarce.

Centralised system. The education system in Afghanistan is extremely centralised. Most key decisions are made in Kabul. This includes curriculum development, teacher training, approving recruitment of teachers and headmasters, selection and production of texts, and, especially, controlling financing and spending. Provincial and district offices have very limited decision-making authority. There are no community managed schools, other than those sponsored by NGOs and donors.

Back-to-school campaign. The government's back-to-school campaign, jointly funded by USAID and UNICEF (with support from Sida), resulted in more than 3 million children in school (grades 1-12) at the start of the 1381 school year (March 2002), up from an original estimate of 1.7 million. In September 2004, the US Embassy in Kabul announced that more than 4.8 million children are now enrolled in schools throughout the country, the largest number in the history of Afghanistan.

During the first phase of the campaign in Wardak, the distribution of learning materials to some 100,000 children and teaching materials to some 2,300 teachers was planned. Approximately 56,000 children and 1,800 teachers received the materials as planned. In accordance with the goals set up, 850 male teachers and 70 female teachers were trained. There were also plans by UNICEF to establish safe water points and sanitary latrines in schools, but these plans had to be delayed.

Number of schools. According to the Provincial Education Directorate of Wardak, there are 187 primary schools and 63 secondary schools in Wardak in 2004.

Salaries. According to the Ministry of Education (June 2004), the average monthly salary for teachers is 2,700 Afs. In addition, some teachers receive U.S.-supported food assistance as a salary supplement (10 litres of vegetable oil per month, in theory) through WFP and the Ministry of Education. Payment of salaries is often delayed by months. In some cases, teachers in NGO-supported school are receiving double salaries, from the government and from the NGO. (The SCA average monthly salary for teachers is only 1,900 Afs.) The salary grade level is largely determined by seniority (length of service). This means that headmasters or administrators might have a lower salary than some of the teachers they

supervise. The salary system is likely to deter some bright young people from making a career in the education sector.

Teachers' level of education. For most teachers in Afghanistan, the level of education is very low. In Wardak, only 6 percent of the teachers have more than a grade 12 education. Some NGOs, including SCA, provide in-service training, but most teachers have had little or no formal teacher training.

Teacher training. There is an enormous shortage of solid teacher training in Afghanistan. After UNICEF, SCA is one of the major providers of teacher training in the country. SCA offers four types of short in-service teacher training:

- subject knowledge, 2 months
- subject teaching competency, one month
- methodology, two weeks
- administrative training for headmasters, two weeks

Some 1,600 teachers and headmasters from all over Afghanistan are trained yearly by SCA. Of the trainees, 21 percent are women.

The BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) produces educational radio programmes (via distance learning) and weekly teacher training radio programmes for Afghanistan.

Staff and gender. In Wardak, there are 2,243 male teachers and 151 female teachers on the government pay-roll, totalling 2,394. In addition, there are 545 male and 8 female staff administrating the provincial education. For comparison, there are 892 male teachers and 157 female teachers on the SCA pay-roll in Wardak.

Enrolment and gender. A survey by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF in 2002, found that approximately 50 percent of the students enrolled in 1381 (2002) were in grade one, due to the massive return of children, not least girls, after many years of conflict and closed schools. This resulted in large grade one classes of mixed age composition. Of all the children enrolled, 92 percent attended primary school (grades 1 to 6) and the rest, only 8 percent, secondary school (grades 7 to 12). The corresponding figures for Wardak were:

Grades 1 to 6 Primary school			**Grades 7 to 12 Secondary school**			**% of students in Primary school**		
Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
64,720	17,503	82,223	10,064	7 [!]	10,071	86.5%	100%	89.1%

The same survey showed that, at the national level, 30 percent of the students enrolled in primary school in 1981 (2002) were girls; and out of the 73,000 teachers, 28 percent were female. Gender disparity varied a lot between provinces and within provinces. In Wardak during the same school-year, 19 percent of the students were girls, and 6.3 percent of the teachers were women. The highest level of gender equality in education was found in Kabul: 45 percent girl students and 65 percent female teachers. The lowest level of gender equality was found in Uruzgan Province: only two percent of the students were girls, with no female teachers. (In 1999, the estimated national enrolment rate was 3 percent for girls and 38 percent for boys.)

There are reasons to believe that enrolment is higher in the more developed areas in Wardak along the Kabul-Kandahar Highway than in more remote and less developed areas such as Behsud I and Behsud II.

According to UNICEF, 75 percent of the school-aged boys (7-13 years) in Wardak attended school in 2003. This was higher than the national average of 67 percent for boys. Only 25 percent of the school-aged girls in Wardak, on the other hand, attended school. This was lower than the national average of 40 percent for girls.

There have been attacks on girls' schools in Wardak during the last two years. No persons have been hurt physically, but buildings have been damaged. The perpetrators are thought to be persons hostile to girls' education.

*

NGOs play an important role in primary and secondary education, not least girls' primary education, in Wardak. The Swedish Committee is the major NGO contributor, followed by several others (the following list is probably not complete):

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) is supporting 45 primary schools in 8 districts (including Jaghato district, which according to AIMS, is part of Ghazni province) in Wardak. Of these schools, 9 are for boys only; 0 for girls only; 17 for boys, with girls in a separate annex; 18 are mixed schools, with boys and girls in the same location; and 1 is a home school. The total enrolment is 28,177 students, of whom 26.6 percent are girls. In these schools, 82 percent of the teachers are male and 18 percent female. Pashto is the language in 80 percent of the schools, Dari (the language of Hazaras and ethnic Tajiks) in 20 percent.

SCA is also supporting one secondary school (grades 7 to 12) in Wardak, with a total enrolment of 615 students, all of whom are boys. All teachers are male, and the language is Pashtu.

Since 1998, **CARE** has been running the Community Organised Primary Education (COPE) Project, with EC, CIDA, Ausaid and private funding, in the Maidan-Shahr, Jalrez, Nirkh and Said Abad districts of Wardak. The purpose of the project is to improve access to and quality of education, and build the capacity of communities to sustain schools. Some of the schools are jointly managed with the Ministry of Education as part of CAREs Gradual Activity Based Phase Out Strategy.

Shuhada, an Afghan NGO founded in 1989 by Dr Sima Samar, is currently running six primary and secondary schools in the Besoud districts. The curriculum is in accordance with the regulations of the Ministry of Education. A Korean NGO is supporting the schools with stationery. The major problems are lack of skilled and experienced teachers, and shortage of school buildings and school furniture. Existing teachers need in-service teacher training. (Personal communication with Dr Sima Samar, December 2004)

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) has no education programmes in Wardak. However, in the neighbouring Bamyan Province, AKF in partnership with NetAid, is helping to reconstruct the educational system. Girls' education and training of female teachers are focal points. The principles of decentralised decision-making, increased community participation

and better teaching/learning methods are stressed. Staff at the Pul-e-Khumri Teacher Training College will be provided with technical support and upgrading.

HOPE Worldwide, an American (US) NGO, has funded the construction of the Zaiwalat Primary and Secondary School for 1,000 – 1,200 students in Jalrez. The school has 16 class-rooms and 10 toilets. The Khone Khomar Secondary School for 800 students in Markaz, also with 16 rooms and 10 toilets, will be inaugurated in October 2004. School supplies are guaranteed on a long-term basis. Links are established with international schools, e.g. pen pals. After the Zaiwalat school had been equipped with a library coupled with English and computer training, school attendance increased by ten percent.

The Afghan Women's Network (AWN) was started in 1998 by Afghan women refugees in Pakistan to lobby for women's rights. After the fall of the Taliban, they moved parts of their activities to Afghanistan. Two years ago, AWN established a girls' school in Godah, a village in Wardak. At present, 80 girls are enrolled. Funding comes from a private family foundation.

Partnership for Education of Children in Afghanistan (PECA), an American (US) NGO, in partnership with **Afghans for Tomorrow (A4T),** a group of young Afghan professionals in exile, are planning an elementary-cum-secondary school for Sheik Yasin village (district not mentioned) in Wardak, for 400 girls and 600 boys. Expected starting date: September 2004. Among the funders are the Episcopal Diocese of New York City and the UN Association of Boulder, Colorado.

USAID. In February 2003, USAID allocated $60 million for a nation-wide three-year programme to renovate 1,000 schools, print textbooks and train teachers.

Under the USAID **Rehabilitation of Economic Facilities and Services (REFS)** Project, three new primary schools will be built in Wardak during 2004, at a cost of $175,000 each. They are located in Shahid Besmila and Yafkalak in Day Mirdad District, and in Daoy in Nirkh District. In addition, eight schools will be refurbished at a cost of $25,000 each. One is located in Nirkh District (Badam), three are located in Behsud District (Apteda-ya Markaz, Rakhul and Jalrez), one in Said Abad District (Shikh abad), two in Markaz District (Daafghan, Maidan Shahr) and one in Chak District (Shahid Araban). The implementing NGO is **Shelter for Life (SFL).** No secondary school is included in the project.

The Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) has reconstructed several schools in Jalrez and Maidan Shahr.

Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium (HRRAC). In March 2004/Hamal 1383, at the start of the new school year, the Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium (HRRAC) released the publication Report Card: Progress on Compulsory Education. HRRAC concluded that although enrolment has increased a great deal, more than half of Afghanistan's children do not attend primary school. Less than 34 per cent of those enrolled are girls. Drop-out rates are high, especially among girls. The quality of education is low.

The World Bank. The first World Bank grant for education in 2002 amounted to $15 million. The project was facilitated by CARE and BRAC in five provinces (Bamyan, Logar, Kapisa, Parwan and Badakhshan). Both of these NGOs were selected by the Ministry of

Education on a competitive basis. The approach has been decentralisation, with school management committees including teachers and parents.

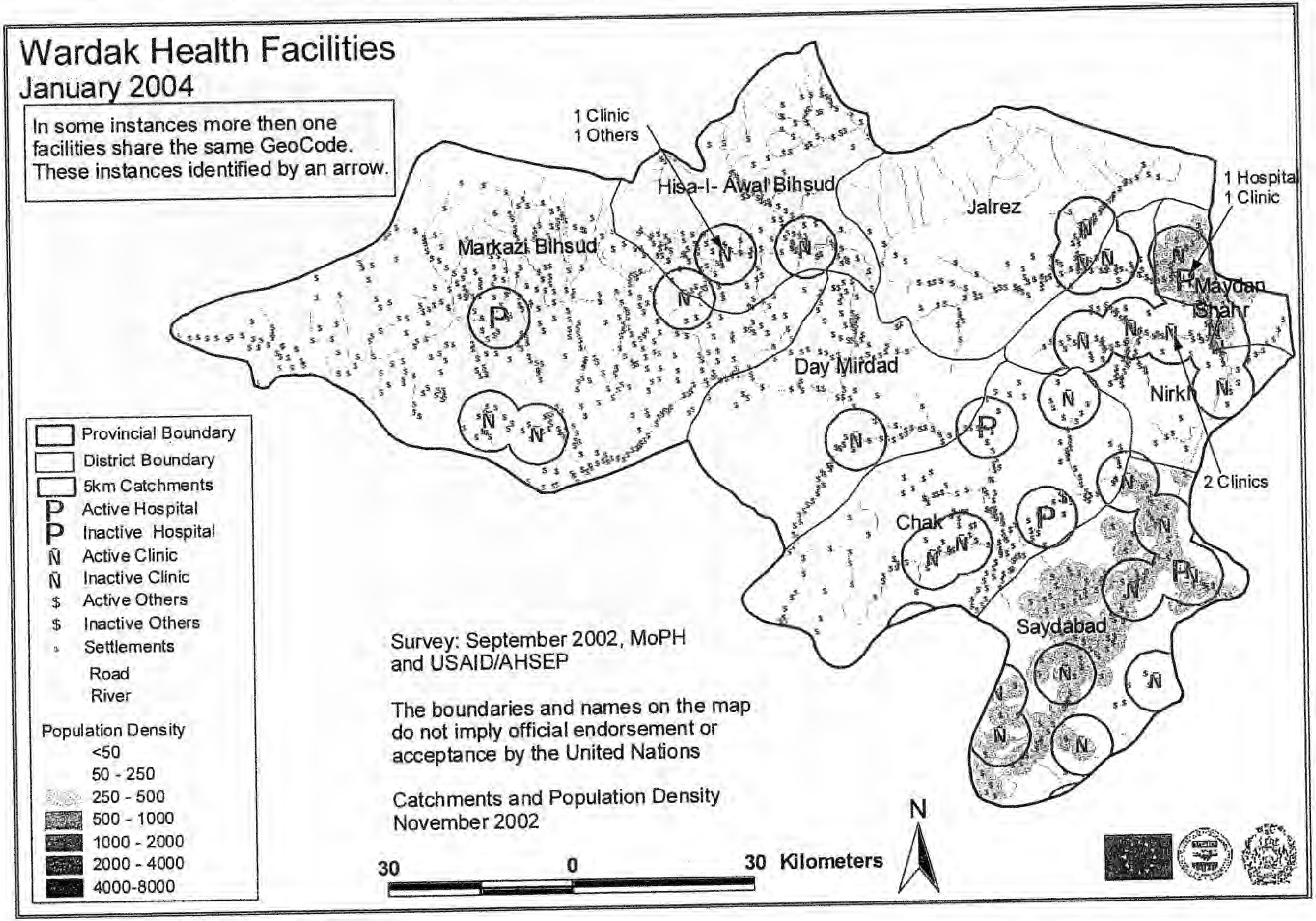
In July 2004, The World Bank/IDA granted $35 million for the Education Quality Improvement Programme (EQUIP) Project in Afghanistan. EQUIP will build on the model of community involvement created with the help from the first grant. Since it is a national programme, Wardak will also benefit from it. Investments will be made in "human resources (teachers, principals and educational administration personnel), physical facilities, promotion of school-based management and capacity building of provincial and district education departments. The project will also promote education for girls by emphasising the priority of female teachers and students in each component activity."

In September 2004, The World Bank announced that all provincial education offices will be provided with high frequency radio communication equipment to improve their school monitoring activities and their communications with the Ministry of Education in Kabul.

> "... the conditions for educational development in Afghanistan, especially in terms of improving quality, do not look promising. There is no shared vision of the problems and priorities facing the education sector. There appears to be no prominent champion of reform at either the national or provincial levels, and there is a remarkable degree of complacency with the status quo. The highly centralised administration of education does not encourage innovation, and tight expenditure controls at all levels almost dictate an inefficient use of scarce resources."
>
> From A Guide to Government in Afghanistan,
> AREU and the World Bank, 2004

Recommendations. Some of the recommendations for the future in the publication quoted above are as follows:

- There is an urgent need to rebuild and modernise teacher education facilities, not least for female teachers, to support quality improvement.
- Community involvement and participation offer the best hope for sustained education improvements.
- Teachers' salaries have to be paid promptly and textbooks and other supplies have to be delivered in time.
- Expose senior educators to international experience of education reform.
- Build planning capacity in provincial and district offices. This has to be a top priority.



Wardak Health Facilities
January 2004
In some instances more then one facilities share the same GeoCode. These instances identified by an arrow.
1 Clinic
1 Others
1 Hospital
1 Clinic
2 Clinics
Hisa-I- Awal Bihsud
Jalrez
Markazi Bihsud
Maydan Shahr
Day Mirdad
Nirkh
Chak
Saydabad
Provincial Boundary
District Boundary
5km Catchments
Active Hospital
Inactive Hospital
Active Clinic
Inactive Clinic
Active Others
Inactive Others
Settlements
Road
River
Population Density
<50
50 - 250
250 - 500
500 - 1000
1000 - 2000
2000 - 4000
4000-8000
Survey: September 2002, MoPH and USAID/AHSEP
The boundaries and names on the map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations
Catchments and Population Density November 2002
30 0 30 Kilometers
N

9. HEALTH

Afghanistan's health indicators are among the worst in the world, with large gender gaps. According to the World Bank (2004), the under-five mortality rate is 172, the infant mortality rate is 115, and the estimated maternal mortality rate is 16 (all per 1,000 live births). The rate of chronic malnutrition (moderate or severe stunting) is around 50 percent. Disability rates due to polio, cerebral palsy, and conflict (including landmines) are very high. Almost half of all deaths among women of reproductive age are a result of pregnancy and childbirth.

It has been estimated that some 23,000 Afghan mothers die in childbirth every year, making it Afghanistan's leading cause of death for women. This tragedy has been characterised as a public health catastrophe with few parallels elsewhere in the world. (www.afgha.com, 30 May 2004)

In some cases, girls are married as young as 12 (and even younger) and give birth at 13, long before they are full-grown adults. Those who survive bear an average of seven children. Three out of four babies born to mothers who died, died themselves within the first year. The government goal is that every province in the country will have at least one fully functioning emergency obstetrics care centre by the end of 2004 or early 2005. (UN News Centre, 3 March 2004)

UNFPA often points out that parents with fewer children can invest more in their health and education. UNFPA also stresses that, to overcome poverty, governments must deal with population concerns and fight poor reproductive health, unwanted fertility, illiteracy and discrimination against women.

Safe motherhood	**Wardak**	**National**	**Ranking**
% of mothers who did **not** give birth in a health facility	94	89	10
% of mothers where last delivery was assisted by **untrained** health professional	89	86	11
% of women who did **not attend antenatal care**	90	84	12
% of women **never heard of family planning**	75	72	12
% of women currently not using family planning	95	90	15

Provincial Report for Wardak Province, UNICEF, 2003

The most common diseases and medical problems in Wardak are as follows:

- high-risk pregnancies
- tuberculosis, typhoid, respiratory diseases
- diarrhoea, infections
- accidents, injuries, burns
- injuries caused by landmines

In addition, leprosy and leishmaniasis are endemic diseases in some parts of Wardak. Malaria is a problem only in low altitude areas.

Records of cases of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted illnesses are not kept. It is generally thought that the incidence of HIV/AIDS is still low. SCA has plans for 2005 to

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5. Women and Human Rights
6. The Opium Economy
7. Agriculture
   (with map)
8. Primary and Secondary Education
9. Health
   (with map)
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sensitise Afghan society towards the issue and to incorporate preventive activities into the ongoing programmes. (SCA Workplan & Budget 2005-06, SCA, 2004)

Many health problems could be avoided by basic health care education, good nutrition and clean water.

The official public health priorities in Afghanistan are:
- reduction of under-five mortality
- reduction of maternal mortality
- addressing malnutrition
- prevention and control of communicable diseases
- addressing inequitable distribution of health services
- capacity building

The Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) was presented by the Afghan Ministry of Health in March 2003, as a result of cooperation between the Ministry and the major donors in the health sector (USAID, World Bank/IDA, EC and UNICEF), NGOs and UN agencies. It provides a standardised list of basic services, including maternal and newborn health, child health and immunisation, public nutrition, and communicable disease control, which should all form the core of all primary health care facilities. BPHS is designed to promote redistribution of services in order to improve access and benefit the most under-served areas. Every province should have good hospital facilities for emergency obstetric care.

In March 2004, SCA took over responsibility for the implementation of health care in Wardak. A contract called **the Performance-Based Partnership Agreement (PPA)** was signed between SCA and the Ministry of Health. Funding for SCA health work in Wardak is provided by the World Bank for 29 months: approximately $4 per capita per year, or about 175 Afs. per capita per year.

In Afghanistan, the total number of medical doctors is low. Other medical staff are even more scarce. Of all health workers, 24 percent are doctors. Of the doctors, less than a quarter are women. There is an urgent need for training of more mid-level health workers, especially women.

It is very difficult to recruit staff to remote rural areas. In spite of top-ups and incentives, many rural health facilities are significantly under-staffed. In the case of women doctors and nurses, there are the additional needs for personal security and employment for the husband. Poor public transport and roads (if any) and communication facilities aggravate the problem. Vehicles and fuel are in desperately short supply. In 1382 (2003/04), only 146 of 303 positions in the Ministry of Health staffing structure for Wardak were filled, i.e. 157 vacancies.

NGOs in Wardak. In Afghanistan, there are more than 80 international NGOs and some 25 national NGOs working in the health sector. Eighty percent of the existing health facilities in Afghanistan are either operated or supported by NGOs. Neither UNAMA nor ACBAR keep updated information on which NGOs are working in the health sector in Wardak. See **Map: Wardak Health Facilities**, January 2004. The most important NGOs in the health sector in Wardak are as follows:

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA). As the so-called Performance-Based Partner in the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS), funded by the World Bank in Wardak, SCA has agreed to build clinics; train doctors, midwives and nurses; improve nutritional standards; institute immunisation programmes; and purchase and distribute essential drugs.

As of August 2004, SCA is managing two District Hospitals (DH) (the General Hospital in Maidan Shahr, and the Shneez Hospital in Said Abad), nine Comprehensive Health Centres (CHC) and 19 Basic Health Centres (BHC) spread all over the province. In addition, two new BHCs in Behsud will be opened in September 2004. SCA is also supporting six EPI (Expanded Programme of Immunisation) centres in Wardak. 50 Community Midwives will be trained in 2004-05 to staff various health facilities providing emergency obstetric care.

SCA has started recruitment and training of 60 Community Health Workers (CHW) in September 2004, and 40 Health Posts (HP) will be established during the autumn of 2004. Recruitment of the CHW and selection of the HP sites have been done in cooperation with the newly established Community Health Committees.

Shuhada, an Afghan NGO founded in 1989 by Dr Sima Samar, runs a 20-bed hospital in the Behsud districts. The hospital offers 24-hour-services in the following fields: gynaecology and obstetrics, surgery, internal medicine, dressing, vaccination, laboratory tests, ultrasonography, X-rays and out-patient department. An average of 30-60 patients (more in the summer) visit the hospital every day. They come not only from Behsud, but also from neighbouring districts, e.g. Panjao, Daikundi and Shahristan. The hospital runs a one-year nurse training programme for 20 students. There is a need for Basic Health Clinics in remote areas with poor roads.

The Shuhada hospital is funded by **Oxfam Netherlands (i.e. Novib,** the Netherlands Institute for Promoting Cooperation with Developing Countries). **UNICEF** has been providing medical equipment, medicines and vaccines. (Personal communication with Dr Sima Samar, December 2004)

Chak-e-Wardak Hospital. The Chak-e-Wardak Hospital Project is run by the Committee for the Promotion of Medical and Humanitarian Aid to Afghanistan, a German NGO. The hospital started as a first aid clinic in 1989, and functions as a hospital since 1993/94. In cooperation with UNICEF, it conducts up to 80,000 vaccinations per year. The hospital has 60 beds, including 40 beds reserved for women and children. It is fully equipped for surgery, x-rays, ultra-sound, ECG and physiotherapy. Up to 4,000 patients are treated per month. The hospital also runs a Medical Training Centre for Women, and a mobile health care unit ("doctors on wheels") to remote villages. The hospital is supervised Ms Karla Schefter, a former operating room nurse from Germany. She is the only permanent European staff member. The hospital is financed mainly through private donations and support from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Interplast Germany, a German NGO with Catholic surgeons from Bavaria, has been providing free reconstructive surgery at the Chak hospital for several years. The team comes for a couple of weeks per year. The main work is on children with congenital defects or burns, land mine victims, and deformities caused by polio or leprosy. Patients come to the Chak Hospital from all over Afghanistan to be treated by Interplast Germany.

The International Assistance Mission (IAM) also provides plastic surgery on a temporary basis at the Chak Hospital. In addition, the **NOOR** programme of the IAM operates a mobile eye clinic at the Chak Hospital on a temporary basis. NOOR has operated almost continuously in Afghanistan since 1966. They provide nearly all medical and surgical eye care in the country. SCA has a formal agreement with IAM regarding training of Community Health Workers (CHW) in Maidan Shahr.

The Afghan Red Cross Society (ARCS) and two local NGOs are supporting three health clinics in Said Abad.

MEDAIR, a Swiss NGO established in 1988, provides tuberculosis (TB) diagnostic and treatment services on a community basis, allowing TB patients to receive supervised treatment locally. SCA has a formal agreement with MEDAIR for training and support of staff involved in TB diagnosis and treatment.

The World Bank. The World Bank has approved a $59.6 million project to help rebuild the public health system in ten provinces with a strong emphasis on prevention and education. The BPHS in Wardak is funded within this project.

USAID. USAID is funding a multi-million-dollar programme, called the Hopkins Programmme, to train 400 midwives in Afghanistan by 2006. At present, there are 467 trained midwives in the country. It is estimated that 18,000 midwives are needed. The SCA midwife training in Wardak could benefit from this programme, e.g. by sharing curriculum and training materials.

Under the **USAID Rehabilitation of Economic Facilities and Services (REFS)** Project, two new health clinics will be built in Wardak during 2004. In addition, five clinics, to be selected by the Ministry of Health, will be refurbished. Implementing NGO will be Shelter for Life (SFL).

The Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) has reconstructed two health clinics in the Jalrez district.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is cooperating closely with SCA in training of medical staff and the implementation of the **IMCI** (Integrated Management of Childhood Diseases) programme. **UNICEF** is providing large quantities of vaccines and medical drugs for BPHS.

10. DISABILITY

> "Households with disabled people are visibly among the poorest along a number of dimensions: they have higher poverty rates and food gaps than average, and less land ownership and access to irrigated land. There is also a higher incidence of female-headed households in this category. However, by no means are all households with disabled people poor. Depending upon the severity of the disability, how this impacts on both the individual as well as the household as a larger entity, the activities of non-disabled household members, and existing household assets including social capital, there is considerable variation in household wellbeing."
>
> From "Afghanistan: State Building, Sustaining Growth, and Reducing Poverty. A Country Economic Report," The World Bank, 2004

> "Recent local surveys indicate that about 3.5% of the population of Afghanistan is disabled... While people disabled by war form a highly visible proportion of the disabled population, an equally significant but much less visible group are those with sensory and multiple impairments. Many disabled people are hidden from view, especially women and children, trapped by their culture and lack of services within the very narrow confines of their homes.
>
> Although the political, social and economic situation in Afghanistan is improving after 24 years of war, many factors and causes of disability remain the same. Mines, cluster bombs and other unexploded ordinance continue to kill and maim people, as do the sporadic acts of warfare that continue in the country. The new emerging health system has not yet been able to reduce, to any substantial degree, the prevalence of disabling diseases such as polio and tuberculosis, nor to provide women in reproduction with adequate service to prevent birth complications such as cerebral palsy. Nor has it addressed disability in its Basic Package of Health Service. A high rate of intermarriage results in increased number of children with malformations and disabling disorders, both physical and mental. Awareness about risks that can be avoided, such as dangerous environment, improved quality of traffic behaviour and performance, remains low, and so does the literacy and educational level, further perpetuating adverse and disability-prone life styles. Concepts such as equal opportunities for people with disability are not widely spread and the prejudice against them is great. People with disability are not integrated in the mainstream services; they are rather actively excluded. They belong to the most oppressed, exposed and vulnerable segments of the population."
>
> From "Workplan & Budget 2005-06", Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, October 2004

In early 2003, a draft national disability policy document was presented by the concerned NGOs and the Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled. This policy document, however, has not been endorsed by the government.

In September 2004, UNDP organised a one-day meeting on the Comprehensive Disabled Afghans Programme (CDAP). Progress achieved and challenges for the future were discussed. In the field of physiotherapy, a task force was formed under the leadership of UNDP to work on curriculum development, possibly extending the training from two-three years to four years.

In Wardak, there is a high incidence of disabilities. Wardak was a war zone for many years, and this has resulted in many war victims, including mine-blast victims. There are also many cases of disability related to polio, cerebral palsy and accidents.

Through the Rehabilitation of Afghans with Disability (RAD) programme, funded by Sida, the **Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)** is active in all districts of Wardak except Behsud I, Behsud II and Jalrez. SCA runs Physiotherapy Centres (for men and women

separately), Community Rehabilitation Centres, and village libraries for the disabled. Support to Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPO) is provided. Special education for people with visual and hearing impairments and with speech problems, and for the mentally retarded is also provided. Adult disabled persons are offered vocational training and micro-credits. Community-based rehabilitation (CBR) in the homes of the disabled is also offered.

The Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled provides some welfare payment to the disabled.

Interplast Germany and the **International Assistance Mission (IAM)** provide surgery and other services on a temporary basis at the Chak-e-Wardak Hospital. See Chapter 9. Health, above.

There is a great need for more support to the disabled in Wardak, especially in districts where no services are available at present.

*

Postscript. On 2 December 2004, the UN News Centre in Kabul announced that a comprehensive disability strategy for three years, with a foreseen national budget of US$9.4 million, had just been agreed in late November, and will be signed once the new Afghan government is in place.

APPENDIX I

Monday, 17 May 2004

Terms of Reference:

The mission is to produce a "Province Analysis" (province survey) of Kunduz and Wardak respectively.

The province surveys shall describe problems and resources in the provinces, focusing on socio-economic conditions and demography, as well as factors that are relevant for our programmes (health, education, disabled, and agriculture).

SCA's policy is emphasizing poverty reduction and gender as being issues of great importance. Perspectives on these factors should therefore also be elucidated.

Basic information about drug handling and the warlords' positions shall be included, as well as an outline of the leading political actors and relevant structures (political, social, religious).

The surveys shall reflect existing and possible future actors of importance for development and reconstruction, and indicate a forecast of future commitments.

Target groups for the subsequent study of the report that is outline summaries of findings are those who are monitoring and developing SCA:s commitments in the SCA project (Basic Package of Health Service) of Kunduz and Wardak, Senior management staff at The Kabul Management Office and the SCA board.

Working period is 2 x 4 weeks of full time work including a period (not surpassing two weeks) in Afghanistan.

The province surveys shall be delivered to SCA not later than October 15, 2004.

A preliminary report shall be given to the Secretary General of SCA one month in advance in order to give the SCA staff possibility to provide feed-back on the semi-final products.

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APPENDIX III

LIST OF CONTACTS FOR THE WARDAK SURVEY IN 2004

Organisation	Contact
ACBAR	Ms Anja de Beer, Executive Coordinator, Kabul
	Mr Mohammad Hashim Mayar, Programme Coordinator, Kabul
AIMS	Mr Abdul Wali Ahadi, GIS Specialist, Kabul
	Ms Hasiba Jalali, Customer Services Assistant, Kabul
AKF	Ms Joanne Trotter, Senior Programme Officer, London
ANSO	Mr Nick Downie, Programme Coordinator, Kabul
AREU	Mr Aftab Opel, Research Manager, Kabul
ARIC	Mr Sayed Padshafi, Catalogue Officer and Assistant Area Manager, Kabul
BAAG	Ms Elizabeth Winter, Special Adviser, London
CARE	Mr Paul Barker, Country Director, Kabul
	Ms Pauline Fowlie, Programme Officer, Kabul
CND	Mr Ikramuddin Sarwary, Head of Public Relations, Kabul
CSO	Mr Mohammad Ali Watanyar, Director General, CSO, Kabul
	Mr Mohammad Sami Nabi, President of Census and Surveys Department, Kabul
EC	Ms Elisabeth Rousset, Programme Officer, Kabul
Hope Worldwide	Mr Mahaveer Jain, Project Officer
IOM	Ms Tristan Burnett, Programme Manager, Kabul
	Ms Karoline Lund, Programme Officer, Mazar-e-Sharif
LSE	Dr Antonio Giustozzi, Researcher, London/Kabul
Ministry of Health	H.E. Dr Suhaila Siddiq, Minister of Health, Kabul
	Dr Feruzuddin Feroz, Deputy Minister of Health, Kabul
	Dr Abdullah Sherzai, Deputy Minister of Health, Kabul
NSP	Female and male staff in Maidan Shahr
President's Office	H.E. Hedayat Amin Arsala, Vice President, Kabul
SCA	Many staff members, including
	Dr Philippe Bonhoure, Health Coordinator, Kabul
	Mr Jesper Jensen, Country Director, Kabul
	Dr Bengt Kristiansson, Secretary General, Stockholm/Kabul
	Mr Quadratullah, NSP National Coordinator, Maidan Shahr
	Mr Hakan Torngard, NSP Coordinator, Kabul/Maidan Shahr
Shuhada	Dr Sima Samar, Founder of Shuhada; Director of the Afghan Human Rights Commission, Kabul
Sida	Ms Karin Seydlitz, Programme Officer, Stockholm
UNDP	Ms Sarah Dyer, CDAP Coordinator, Kabul
	Mr Razi Khan Hamdard, CDAP National Officer, Kabul
UNHCR	Ms Anna Bendall, Regional Operational Information Coordinator, Kabul
	Mr Daniel Endres, Deputy Chief of Mission, Kabul
	Ms Nooria Sadaat, National Officer, Kabul
	Mr Sardarwali Wardak, National Officer, Kabul
UNICEF	Ms Nadia Behboodi, Assistant Project Officer, Kabul
	Mr Jonathan Mark Cauldwell, Project Officer, Kabul
USAID	Mr Robert Jimenez, Project Implementation Officer, Kabul
Wardak Shura	Members, including

	Mr Alhaj-Qazi-Ras Mohammad (Dalili), Provincial Governor, Maidan Shahr
	Ms Nafisa Naseeb, Behsud II
	Mr Nek Mohammad Shah Nori, Behsud
WHO	Dr Ahmed Shadoul, Child Health Promotion (IMCI), Kabul
World Bank	Mr Asger Christensen, Senior Operations Officer, Kabul
	Ms Carol Le Duc, Senior Social Development Specialist (Gender), Kabul
	Mr Tashi Tenzing, Senior Sanitary/Environmental Engineer, Kathmandu/Kabul

ACRONYMS, CURRENCY AND FISCAL YEAR

ACRONYMS

AIMS	Afghanistan Information Management Service
ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
ANSO	Afghanistan Non-Governmental Organisation Security Office
ARCS	Afghan Red Cross Society
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
AWN	Afghan Women's Network
BAAG	British Agencies Afghanistan Group
BPHS	Basic Package of Health Services
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CBR	Community-Based Rehabilitation
CDAP	Comprehensive Disabled Afghans Programme
CHC	Comprehensive Health Centre
CHW	Community Health Worker
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CND	Counter-Narcotics Directorate
CSO	Central Statistics Office
COPE	Community Organised Primary Education
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DoRRD	Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Programme
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
HNI	Health Net International
HRRAC	Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium
IAM	International Assistance Mission
ICARDA	International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
IDA	International Development Assistance
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMCI	Integrated Management of Child Illnesses
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
IWPR	Institute for War and Peace Reporting
LSE	London School of Economics and Political Science
MRRD	Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development
MSF	Médicins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders
MSH	Management Sciences for Health
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRVA	National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RAD	Rehabilitation of Afghans with Disability

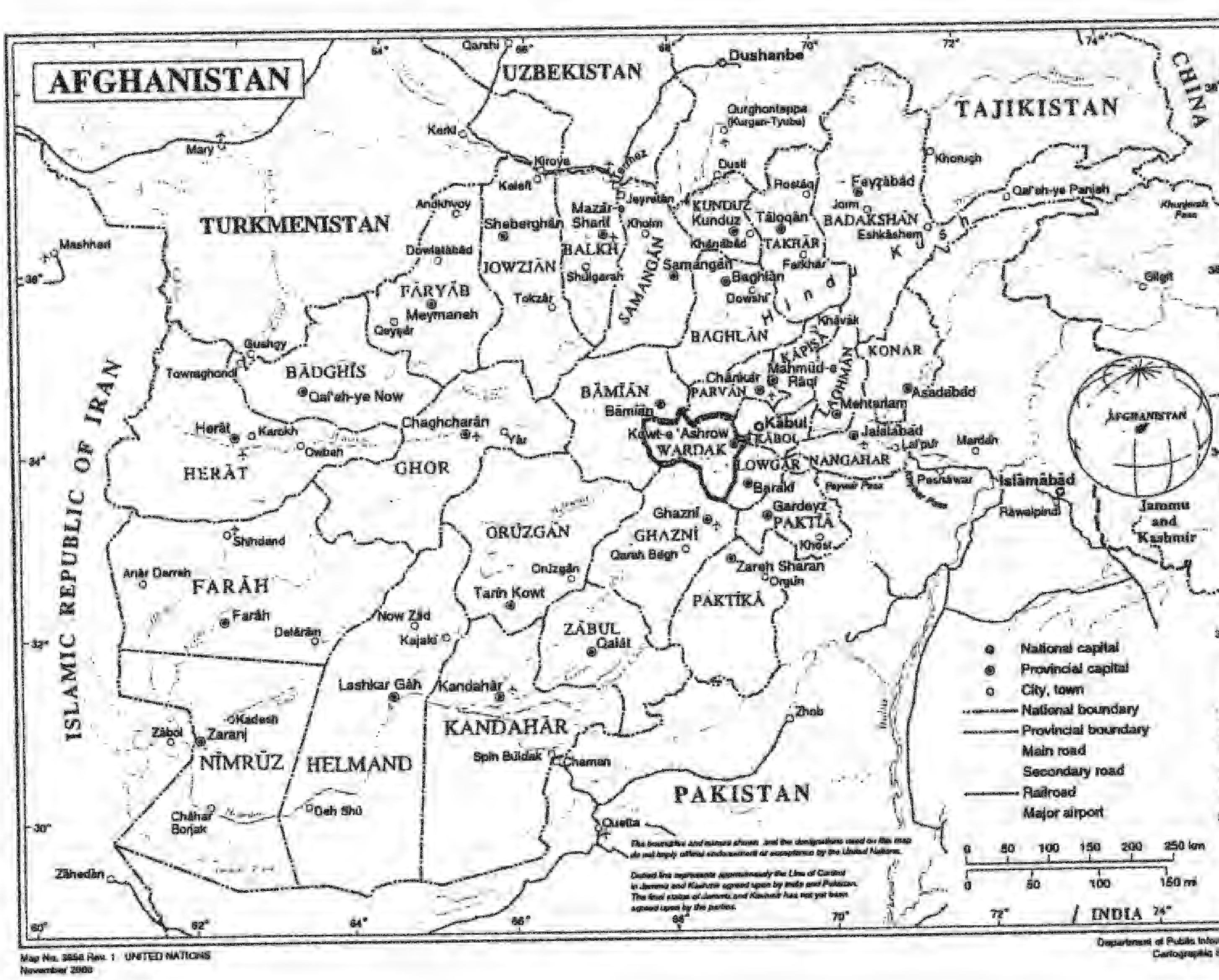
RAMP	Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Programme (USAID)
REFS	Rehabilitation of Economic Facilities and Services (USAID)
SCA	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
SFL	Shelter for Life
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund (also written UNPF)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

CURRENCY EQUIVALENT
Currency Unit = Afghani
US $1 = 49 Afs (2004 Average)

GOVERNMENT FISCAL YEAR
21 March – 20 March
2001/02 = 1380
2002/03 = 1381
2003/04 = 1382
2004/05 = 1383

Wardak


Gardandiwal
Maidan Shahr
Markaze Behsud
Chak-e-Wardak
Said Abad
Jaghato


AFGHANISTAN
UZBEKISTAN
TAJIKISTAN
CHINA
TURKMENISTAN
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
PAKISTAN
INDIA
Jammu and Kashmir
Dushanbe
Mashhad
Herat
Kabul
Islamabad
Peshawar
Kandahar
Quetta
BADGHIS
FARYAB
JOWZJAN
BALKH
SAMANGAN
KUNDUZ
TAKHAR
BADAKHSHAN
BAGHLAN
BAMIAN
PARVAN
KAPISA
LAGHMAN
KONAR
NANGAHAR
KABOL
WARDAK
LOWGAR
PAKTIA
PAKTIKA
GHAZNI
ORUZGAN
ZABUL
KANDAHAR
HELMAND
NIMRUZ
FARAH
HERAT
GHOR
National capital
Provincial capital
City, town
National boundary
Provincial boundary
Main road
Secondary road
Railroad
Major airport
Department of Public Information
Cartographic Section

1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) has been awarded a contract by the Ministry of Health to implement **the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS)** in the province of Wardak. This, in fact, means that SCA now has the responsibility for the implementation of all health care in the province.

In addition, SCA has been selected by the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (MRRD) and The World Bank to be the Facilitating Partner of **the National Solidarity Programme (NSP)** in Wardak. The objective of the NSP is "to lay the foundations for strengthening community-level governance, and to support community-managed sub-projects that improve rural communities' access to social and productive infrastructure and services." The approach includes the establishment of democratic and representative Community Development Committees (CDCs) at the village level, thereby challenging some of the most central Afghan norms, namely gender relations and local-level power structures.

Moreover, SCA gives substantial support to **primary and secondary education, services for the disabled** and **agriculture** in the province.

With all these responsibilities in mind, I was asked to prepare a provincial survey to provide the SCA Board, management, and middle-level staff with an updated and broad picture of the current development situation in Wardak. My Terms of Reference are presented in Appendix I. In total, I was given four weeks to prepare the survey.

Basically, the survey is a desk study. Sources of information are presented in Appendix II. References. Documents of especially great value for the survey have been *Out of Step? Agricultural Policy and Afghan Livelihoods* by Ian Christoplos, AREU, as well as *Afghanistan: State Building, Sustaining Growth, and Reducing Poverty. A Country Economic Report* and *A Guide to Government in Afghanistan*, both published by The World Bank, the latter publication in partnership with AREU. In addition, a large number of smaller articles and news items from the web are quoted, with reference given in the text.

The survey is also based on correspondence and meetings I had in Afghanistan from 27 May to 8 June 2004. I interviewed SCA staff, government staff, local officials, UN/World Bank, USAID, EC and NGO representatives, and ordinary women and men. Most of my time was spent in Kabul. On 6 June 2004, I attended the Provincial Shura in Maidan Shahr, interviewed some Shura members and had discussions with National Solidarity Programme staff, including a women's group. See Appendix III. List of Contacts.

The information on population by district, gender and age is based on official but preliminary data I received from the Director General of the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in Kabul. In the absence of a real census and other reliable sources of information, the figures in this survey should be seen as rough estimates of limited reliability.

Many people have been very helpful in providing data for this survey. In particular, I would like to thank Mr Anayatullah, Information Chief Officer, SCA, for arranging my meetings in Afghanistan and Dr Philippe Bonhoure, SCA Health Coordinator, for providing useful information on the health situation in Wardak. I am also grateful for valuable and inspiring

comments on the first draft of the survey by Dr Bengt Kristiansson, SCA Secretary General, and Mr Hakan Torngard, SCA/NSP Coordinator in Wardak.

2. BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY: WARDAK PROVINCE

Area:	**8,938 square kilometres.** (AIMS* 2004; according to AIMS, the district of Jaghato belongs to the province of Ghazni, not Wardak.) See Map.
Area – comparative:	Afghanistan covers 647,500 sq.km.; Sweden 450,000sq.km. Kunduz covers 8040 sq.km.; Kandahar 54,022 sq.km.; Herat 54,775 sq.km.; Sodermanland 8,388 sq.km.
Provincial boundaries:	Bamian, Parwan, Kabul, Logar and Ghazni provinces, clock-wise
Climate:	Arid to semiarid. Cold winters and hot summers. Temperatures vary between –20°C in winter (and even colder at very high altitudes) and +40°C in summer. The current drought which has lasted for six years is the longest and most severe in Afghanistan's known climatic history.
Natural hazards:	Drought, frost attacks, floods and earthquakes.
Terrain:	Fertile valleys, semiarid lands and rugged, mountainous terrain with elevated plateaus in the Behsud districts.
Major mountain range:	**The Koh-e-Baba (The Father of Mountains) mountain range**, with the highest peak 5,060 metres above sea level in Behsud I (Awal). Most of the mountain passes are closed in the winter and communication with the outside world is cut off.
Major rivers:	The Helmand River (800 miles) and the Kabul River, both originating southeast of the Koh-e Baba mountain range.

Population by district, gender and age (June 2004):

	Males	Females	Total	Sex ratio	Under 18 yrs
Maidan-Shahr	17,659	17,349	35,008	101.8	54.6%
Jalrez	22,680	22,193	44,873	102.2	56.2%
Behsud I***	12,537	12,542	25,079	100	55.4%
Behsud II****	47,387	46,941	94,328	101.0	57.1%
Daimirdad	14,593	14,272	28,865	102.2	57.3%
(Jaghato	23,615	22,888	46,503	103.2)	61.8%
Chak	42,733	40,643	83,376	105.1	56.1%
Said Abad	58,752	56,041	114,793	104.8	56.1%
Nirkh	29,066	27,288	56,354	106.5	58.2%
Wardak, Total	**245,407****	**237,269****	**482,676****	**103.4**	**56.5%**

**not including Jaghato
*** also called Hesa-Awal-Behsud
****also called Markaz-i-Behsud

Note 1. This table is based on **official data** from the first phase of the Afghan population census (2004) in Wardak. The latest data available were received from Mr Mohd Ali Watanyar, Director General of the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in June 2004. **In the absence of a real census or other reliable sources of information, the figures above (and below) are rough estimates of limited reliability.**

Note 2. The original table included data for **the district of Jaghato**: 46,503 persons. According to AIMS, Jaghato district is part of Ghazni; for that reason, it has been excluded from the above table. According to CSO, Jaghato is part of Wardak.

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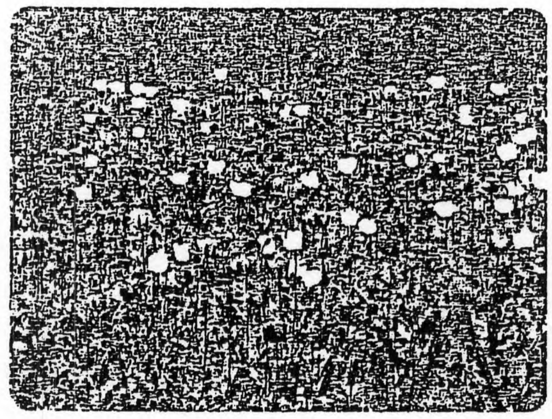
* AIMS (Afghanistan Information Management System) of UNDP produces standard and custom geographic information systems (GIS), and provides technical assistance to organisations on design of databases and GIS systems. AIMS is based in Kabul, with regional representation in the UNAMA offices. AIMS datasets and maps are free of charge through its web site (www.aims.org.af).



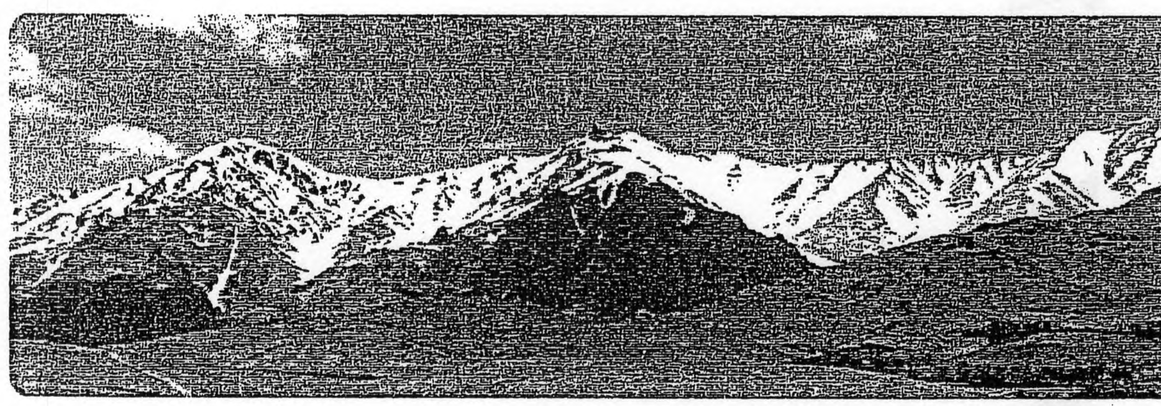








Swedish Committee for Afghanistan



Provincial Survey of WARDAK

Katarina Larsson
Consultant
October 2004

Provincial Survey of WARDAK

Katarina Larsson
Consultant
October 2004